Understand your feline housemate: How to decipher your cat's actions

moderncat

The lifestyle magazine for modern cats and their companions

SPRING · SUMMER 2023

THE SECRET LIFE OF CATS

BRAIN GAMES FOR CATS p54

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p60

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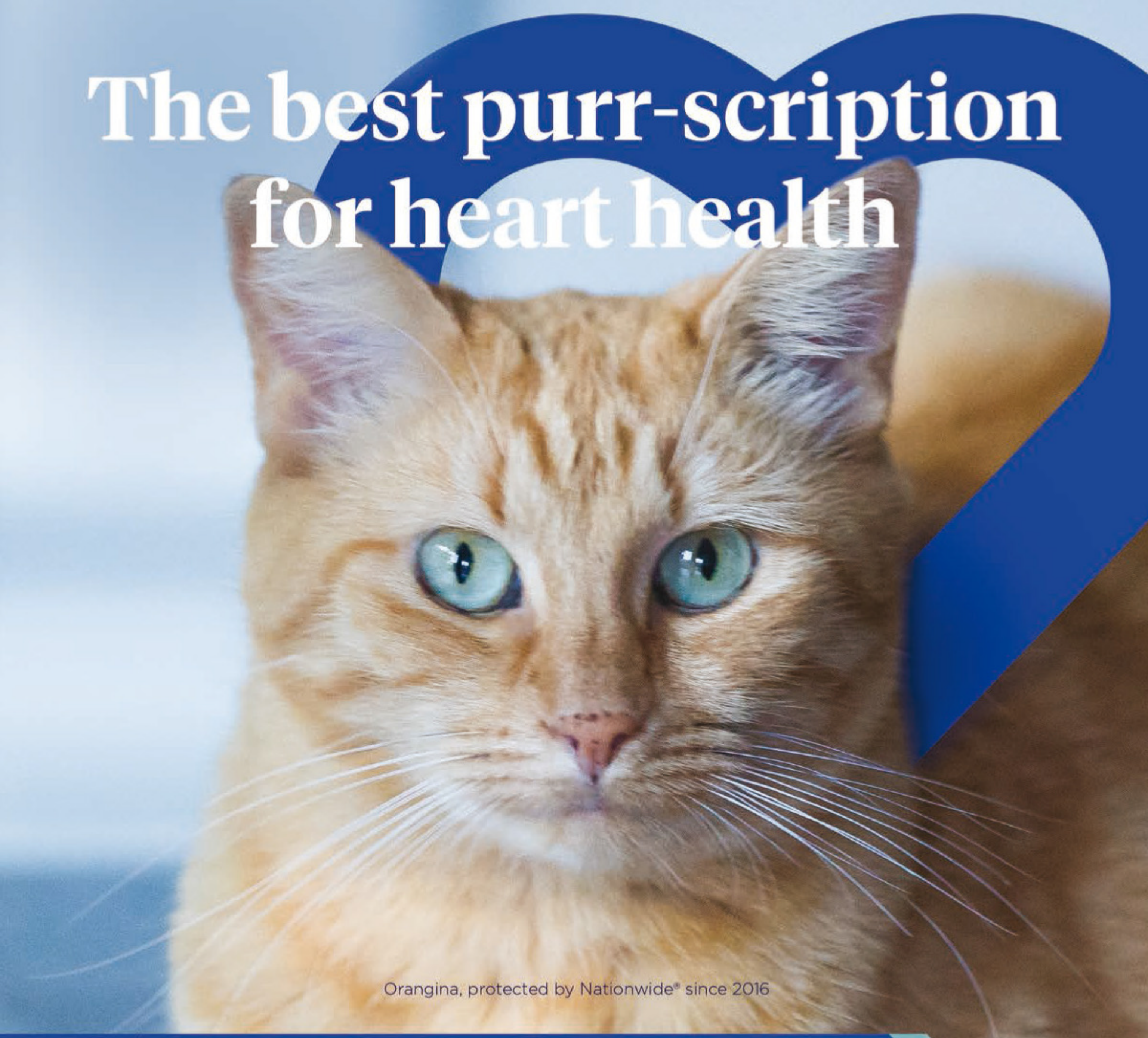

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*Levine, Glenn., et al. "Pet Ownership and Cardiovascular Risk: A Scientific Statement from the American Heart Association." Circulation 127.23 (2013): 2353-2363.

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Willis, a Russian Blue, photographed by the immensely talented **Pete Thorne.**

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COVER INSET PHOTOS: TOP ALENA OZEROVA/SHUTTERSTOCK; BOTTOM VETRESKA BLOOMING CACTUS CAT TREE
THIS PAGE TOP RIGHT ILLUSTRATION BY MICHELLE SIMPSON; MIDDLE RIGHT PHOTO VEERA/SHUTTERSTOCK

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EDITOR'S LETTER

CONNIE WILSON WITH DAO DAO, PHOTO TANYA KING

Ah cats, our enigmatic besties. Part of our fascination, no doubt, is that cats retain one foot in the wild. Overall, cats became a domesticated companion of humans without changing much, says evolutionary geneticist Eva-Maria Geigl. And unlike dogs, they largely domesticated themselves. This is why cats are so interesting—and so frequently confounding; they retain much of their wildcat origins.

Luckily, recent study has shed light on why cats behave the way they do and this understanding helps us to better provide for our cats' needs. In this issue we look at why cats need cat trees and share expert advice for choosing the ultimate cat tree for your cat. Feline behaviour expert Mieshelle Nagelschneider explains seven of the most baffling cat behaviours **(page 44)**, decoding these mysterious cat actions and unpacking the impetus behind them.

We don't scrimp on the entertainment either, taking a look at the ultimate celebrity cat lady, Taylor Swift, and her feline loves **(page 28)**. Oh, and we've made your weekend plans for you: a recent crop of must-watch, critically acclaimed cat documentaries is essential streaming. Find out what to watch on **page 62.**

Looking to improve your sense of wellbeing? The fast track to feeling happier is being of service to others. Hannah Shaw, the beloved humane educator known as "Kitten Lady", has the intel you need to get started with fostering kittens. Volunteering doesn't get more rewarding—or adorable. See what's involved on **page 60,** then turn to **page 54** to stoke your cat's interest and engage their mind with our Brain Games For Cats. These fun activities and ideas will banish boredom and help keep your cat feeling fulfilled.

We've also packed the issue with loads of cool finds to create a beautiful, engaging home environment both you and your cat will love, and share recommended wellness solutions, including CBD for cats and what it can help address. Of course, we have months of giveaways (check out **page 20**), too-cute cat photos throughout to brighten your day, and so much more.

We hope this issue inspires and enlightens. Thank you so much for being a part of this terrific community of cat lovers.

With love,

Connie

Connie Wilson, Publisher & Editor-in-Chief

OUR READERS WRITE

Me Time

Lynxy is starting off his weekend by catching up on some reading. @modern_cat_mag is his favourite! —***@kittymojito***

Cat Life Hacks

@modern_cat_mag, thanks so much for the ideas which come in handy with long work days.—***@anamartinezescalona***

Cat News

Oh, just catching up on the latest cat news. —***@alex_catches_things***

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CONTRIBUTORS

Our gorgeous cover cat was photographed by the incredibly talented **Pete Thorne.** Pete is the acclaimed author of the heartstring-tugging senior dog photobook *Old Faithful: Dogs of a Certain Age* (HarperCollins) and the series Fat Cats, both of which have been global viral hits. His work has been featured extensively in popular media worldwide. Pete currently resides in Toronto, ON and volunteers as a photographer with a number of local animal rescue organizations.

Award-winning Canadian journalist **Tracey Tong** is a regular Modern Cat contributor. A lifelong animal lover, she and her two children fundraise for the pet rescues and shelters in Ottawa, ON. The Burlington native has written for dozens of publications across North America, including *Modern Dog, Canadian Running, Seventeen, Parenting Times, The Toronto Star, National Post, and The Globe and Mail*. For this issue, she talked to experts about how to choose the perfect cat tree **(page 56)**, and screened the latest cat documentaries **(page 62)** to hit the small screen.

Writer and Photographer **Kelly Caldwell** has dedicated her creative focus to companion animals for nearly 20 years. She became a cat mom fairly late in life—and quite unexpectedly. Kelly and her daughter live in Guelph, ON with Eevee the cat and two Boston Terriers. Turn to **page 70** for Kelly's look at the top 10 most popular cat breeds and the intriguing characteristics and quirks that make them irresistible!

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VOL 12 NO 1

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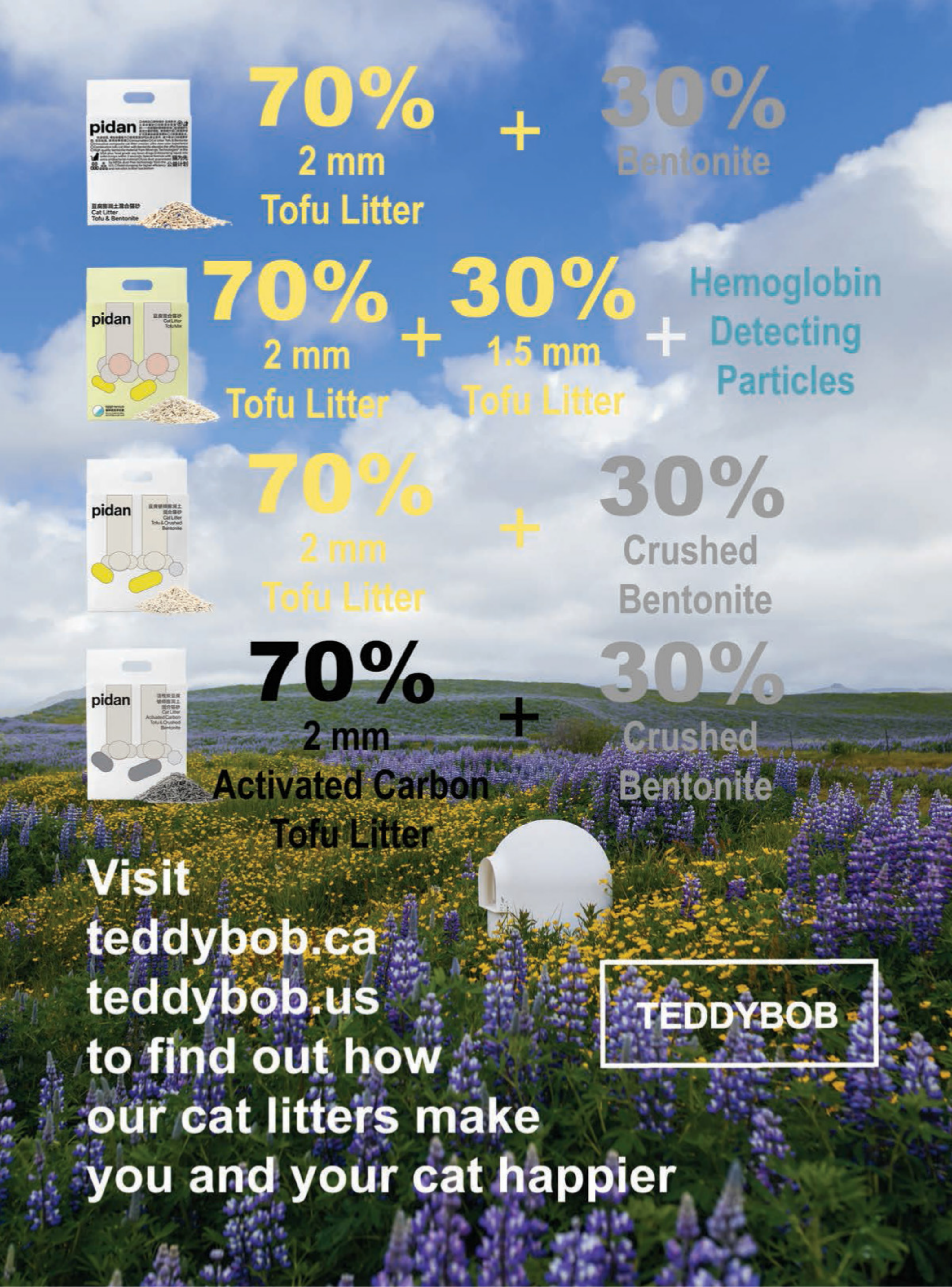

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Stuff We Love

Modern Cat staffers' picks of the litter!

1 Look "mice" in this unisex **screen-printed graphic tee** from Skinny Pete's Catnip. This super-comfy tee comes in seven different sizes.—***Yaunna*** **($25, *skinnypetescatnip.com*)**

2 **Keep the litter mess under control!** The NVR Miss Litterbox features high walls to keep litter and kitty mess contained and a cat-friendly center entrance for easy use. A smooth finish, flat floor, and curved corners make it easy to clean!—***Jennifer*** **(from $26, *nvrmiss.com*)**

3 **Say goodbye to the stress of unexpected vet bills!** Nationwide pet insurance plans allow you to see any vet at any time, and get your money back on eligible vet bills so you never have to weigh care versus cost.—***Anna*** **(plans start at $35 a month, *petinsurance.com*)**

Bandit
For the Love of a Cat
SHARON R. SMITH

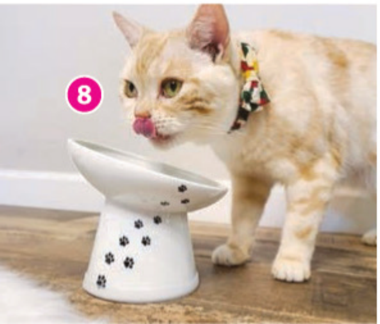
4 **A poignant, heartwarming story** of feline resilience and enduring friendship. *Bandit: For the Love of a Cat* by Sharon R. Smith chronicles Bandit and Sharon's moving journey together. A must-read for anyone who has suffered the loss of a beloved cat.—***Linda*** **(from $10, *amazon.com*)**

5 Take your adventure kitty on journeys with Mr. Peanut's Vancouver Series Backpack! Airline compatible, this **comfortable soft-sided carrier** offers faux fleece padding, leak-proof construction, self-locking zippers, and pockets for storage!—***Shakira*** **($96, *mrpeanutspetcarriers.com*)**

6
Churu Bites

6 Made with natural chicken and wild tuna, the Churu Bites Chicken Recipe Wraps from Inaba combine a soft-baked exterior with that creamy Churu **filling cats go crazy for.** Sure to entice even the pickiest kitties!—***Nuit*** **($6, *inabafoods.com*)**

7 **Say goodbye to litter box mess!** The Grate Litter Box features a grate to capture litter as your cat exits the box, as well as dividing interior walls, two windows for ventilation, an easy entry way, and a lid with a charcoal filter to control and contain odour.—***Cecilia*** **($120, *thegratelitterbox.com*)**



8 The Stress-Free Tilted, Raised porcelain cat food bowl from My Three Cats **prevents whisker fatigue and neck stress** and aids in digestion! Dishwasher and microwave safe, this feeder is also anti-spill and has a rubberized bottom for added stability.—***Connie*** **($34, *mythreecats.com*)**

The Nine Lives Of Felix The Tomcat
Felix The Tomcat
And M.P. Frank

9 *The Nine Lives of Felix the Tomcat* by Mike Chatterson is a **hilarious "autobiography"** from the perspective of Felix the tomcat, an over-confident and adventurous cat who gets himself into trouble along the way. Charmingly quirky, this work of feline fiction definitely entertains!—***Constance*** **($10, *amazon.com*)**

10 The Gone Fishin' Cat Tent from Triple T Studios is a **pawsome hideaway!** Made from cotton canvas fabric, this cute tent features a removeable and washable cat mat, an anti-slip bottom, and a mesh window. And it's easy to pop up and fold down!—***Rosie*** **($27, *triple-t-studios.com*)**

11
Holistic Natural Feline Treats

11 **Treats you can feel good about!** The crunchy Holistic Natural Feline Treats from Bench & Field Pet Foods combine sardine, chicken, and salmon with added vitamins and minerals, salmon oil, flaxseed, and a blend of fresh fruits and veggies to bring the yum!—***Simran*** **($9, *amazon.com/benchandfield*)**

12 **Make cleaning the litter box a cinch** with this litter disposal system! The new Purrr Litter TWIST'R from Red Rocket Pets controls odour, holds up to 18 pounds of litter waste per bag, and it comes with a scoop, which can be stored in the handy scoop holder when not in use!—***Mina*** **($70, *redrocketpets.com*)**

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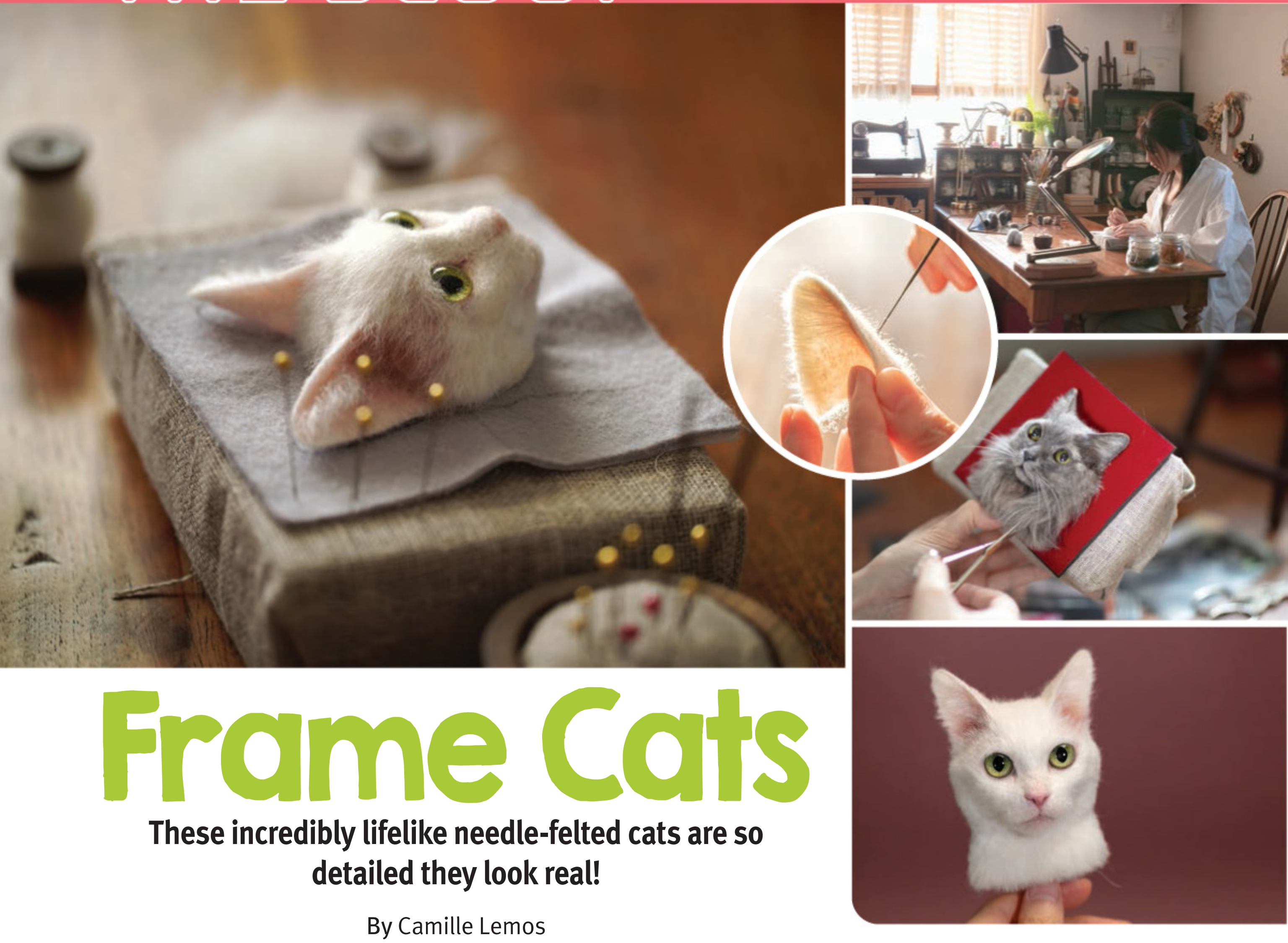

Frame Cats

These incredibly lifelike needle-felted cats are so detailed they look real!

By Camille Lemos

44 year-old Japanese artist Sachi's specialty is a unique one: she makes highly detailed, hyper-realistic cat faces from needle-felted wool. The attention to detail lends mind-boggling verisimilitude—the results are so lifelike you could be forgiven for thinking them real.

Sachi fell in love with her craft quite by accident. In the spring of 2015, she happened to stop by a handicraft store and encountered wool felt for the first time. Inspired by her "deeply-beloved three ex-stray cats," she decided to make felines out of felted wool, eventually coining her craft wakuneco, Japanese for "frame cats."

The Internet kept her from toiling in obscurity. In 2016, her work went viral thanks to Facebook. "The number of followers increased by 50,000 in one week," recalls Sachi.

Each work is a labour of love, so time-consuming that she is only able to complete three works in a year. "A great deal of time is spent analyzing," she explains. "I patiently go through many steps to make it look like a real cat—the period is about three to four months."

After completing a work, Sachi opens up entries for her next cat model. She does not take reservations but looks for another cat after completing the last. Cat lovers hoping to have their cat selected submit photos and the price they are able to pay, then cross their fingers they will be chosen.

How to Make Wakuneco was released in Japan last summer. The book was so well received that it has already been reprinted four times. Sachi is hopeful an English translation will be published, but in the meantime, the Japanese version is available at Kinokuniya bookstores. "It contains many photos, so please enjoy it!" she says.

* ***Purchase the e-book on Amazon Japan's website.***

PHOTOS SACHI/WAKUNECO

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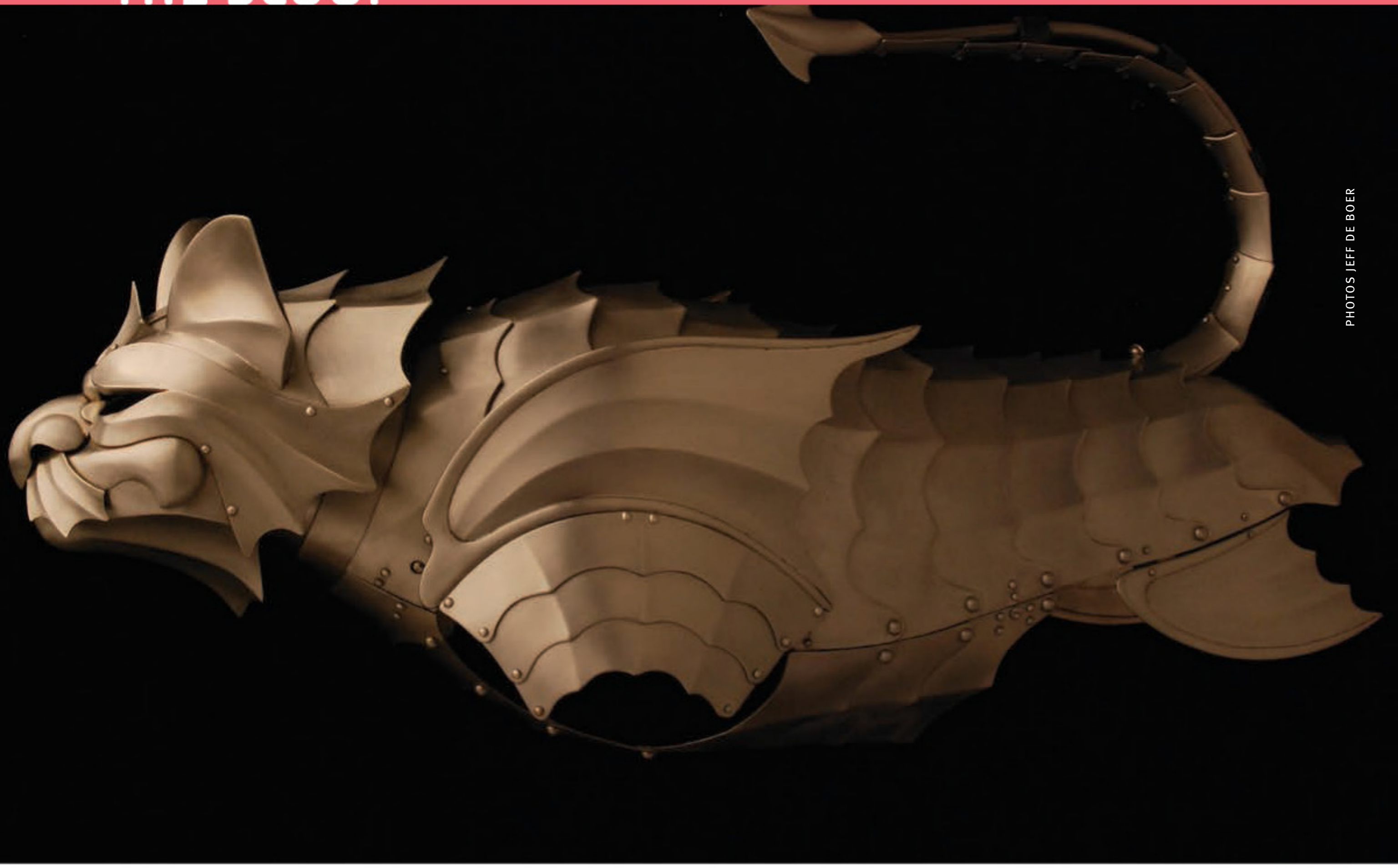

PHOTOS JEFF DE BOER

CAT ARMOUR

An artist's meticulously crafted armour for cats and mice captivates, conjuring a fantasy world where these eternal nemeses do battle

By Rose Frosek

Canadian artist Jeff de Boer creates meticulous, *Game of Thrones*-worthy armour—but for cats and mice. Working mostly in nickel, steel, and/or brass, he recreates the armour of different historical eras, crafting the suits of ancient samurai and Renaissance knights. The spellbinding craftsmanship invokes an epic, age-old cat-and-mouse battle.

De Boer has been honing his craft for 36 years, first making a tiny suit of mouse armour as a side project to jewelry making. His lifelong passion for armour was sparked as a five-year-old visiting Calgary's Glenbow Museum. Studying jewelry making in the 1980s, he found a way to marry his passion for armour

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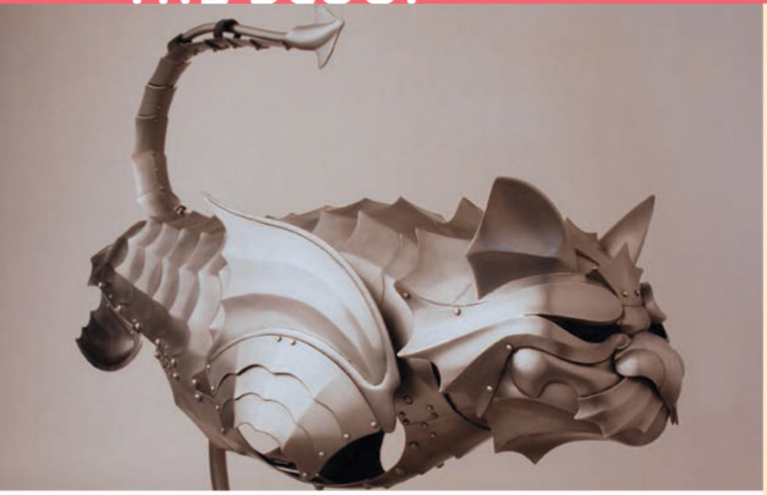
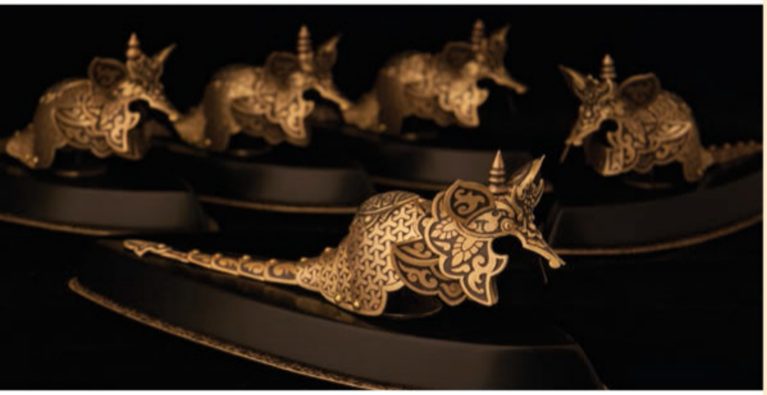




with the small scale of the work he was creating by asking himself: what sort of armour would be tiny but still feel like it had real purpose? “And then it dawned on me: I could make a suit of armor for a mouse,” de Boer told *National Geographic*. “That was the transitional moment—as Disney said, ‘It all started with a mouse’.”

With the world’s first suit of armour for a mouse forged, the need for an antagonist obviously presented itself, and de Boer began crafting armour for cats as well. Since then, he estimates he has created more than 500 suits of armour for cats and mice in his Calgary studio, ranging from Islamic-inspired chainmail for a cat to Crusader armour complete with a mouse-sized helmet.

All feature museum-quality, painstaking detail. “I am a maker of things: things that are authentic, things that leave people with positive memories and the feeling that beauty and magic still have a place in our world,” says de Boer.

One tiny medieval armor for a mouse takes from 30 to 50 hours to make—and that’s on top of the 40 hours it takes to create the tiny tools necessary to fashion the armour. Cat armor takes anywhere from 50 to 200 hours.

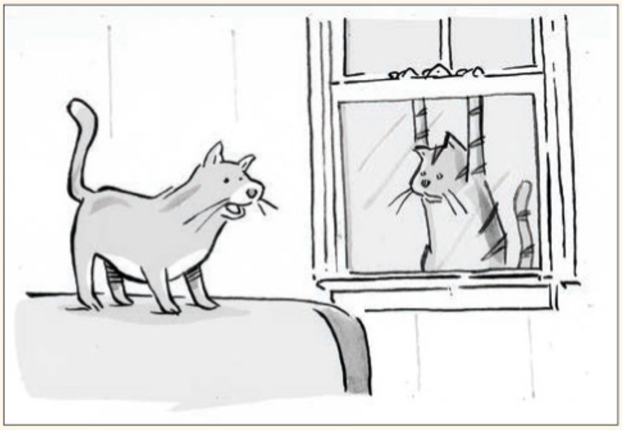
Commissioned cat armour requests are usually made to memorialize a beloved pet and generally come from people with a deep interest in history and art—like de Boer himself. “These are like reliquaries in a way, as I build in details that reflect the cat’s personality,” says de Boer. He stresses his armour is not for living creatures to wear. He tried dressing a trained “stunt cat” supposedly accustomed to wearing clothes on camera just once for a Japanese game show in the early 1990s, and learned his lesson: “Highly not recommended,” he reports.

But as an artwork to marvel over? The armour is undeniably incredible, capturing the imagination and conjuring an ancient battle between the species. ■

PHOTOS LEFT JEFF DE BOER

CAPTION THIS!

Test your "funny." Create a caption for this cartoon and submit your entry at *moderncat.com/cartooncaption*. The most comic captions will be published in the next issue.



CARTOONS BY JOHN KLOSSNER; JKLOSSNER.COM

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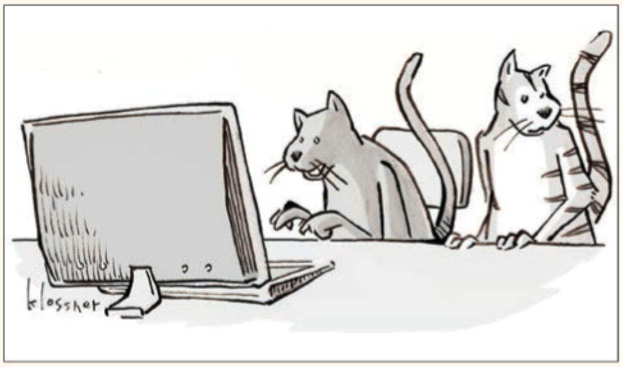

“Just checked WebMD...looks like it’s either malaria, gangrene, or a hairball.”
SUBMITTED BY KURT ELFERING

RUNNER-UP CAPTIONS

“We're in!!! Hellloooo Amazon!”
SUBMITTED BY BRENDAN POWERS

“Okay! Do you want to see the fisheries live cam or should I find that video of big cat mating rituals?”
SUBMITTED BY FRANCES OLSON

“To be honest I don’t think that this cat is even playing the piano.”
SUBMITTED BY JOSEPH DEWAN

“Time to schedule a vet appointment... for the dog, that is!”
SUBMITTED BY YVONNE STEYER

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SMILE!

moderncat's Photo Contest Winners!

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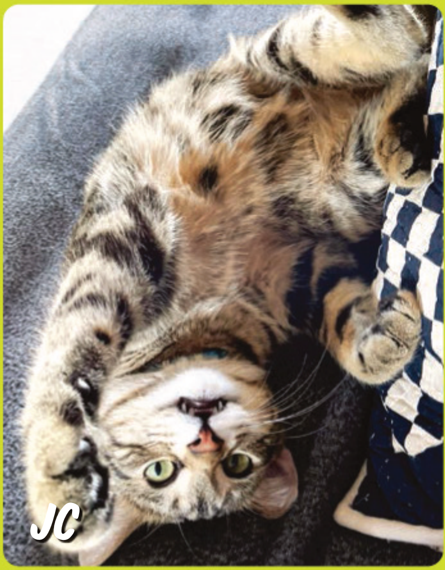
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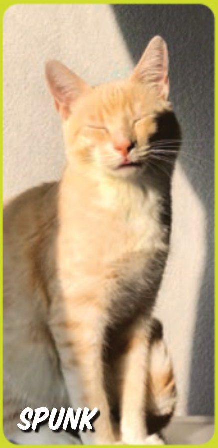
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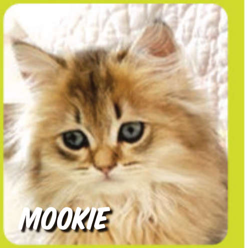
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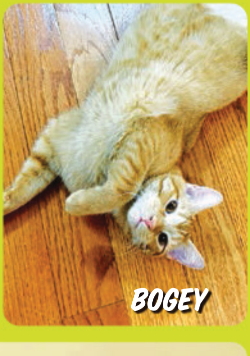
BOGEY

AURORA

IGNACIO

CHARLIE

LUIGI

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HENRY

DUTCHESS

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INSET PHOTO: KOA / DOMESTIC LONGHAIR
SUBMITTED BY ANN TYE

Great Giveaways
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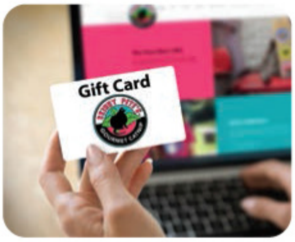
We're giving it away! Enter to win fabulous giveaways April through September. Go to **moderncat.com/giveaways** to enter! Lucky readers will win every two weeks.

April

1st-14th

Win 1 of 12 **Fur-Zoff,** the new and better way to remove pet hair from your home and vehicles. Made in USA of 90% recycled materials, it's 100% durable!



15th-30th

Win 1 of 4 $50 gift cards from **Skinny Pete's Gourmet Catnip!** Redeemable on the Skinny Pete's Catnip website, winners can choose from their selection of catnip and cat lover products.

May

1st-14th

Win a **Litter-Robot 4!** Never scoop again and reduce litter box odors with the next evolution of the highest-rated WiFi-enabled, automatic, self-cleaning litter box for cats.

THE MANE TAME
THE SWIPE
THE BALM

15th-31st

Win 1 of 2 feline grooming prize packs from **Pride + Groom!** Includes their foaming waterless shampoo, grooming wipes, a brush, deodorizer, and paw balm.

June

1st-14th

Win a Sleepypod from **Morris Animal Foundation!** The Sleepypod pet bed, carrier, and crash-tested car seat designed to fit your cat's individual needs.

15th-30th

Win an Ivy 3 cat tree from **Mau!** A beautifully balanced cat tree that is covered in scratching rope, provides 3x cozy lounge spots, and brings a stylish zen to your modern home.

July

1st-14th

Win 1 of 2 Nest Eggs from **MyThreeCats.com!** This sleek side table features a raised lounge pod for your cat and is a great cat-friendly home décor piece.

15th-31st

Win a litter maintenance prize pack from **Litter Genie!** Includes a Litter Genie Disposal Pail and seven packs of the Litter Genie Easy Roll Refills.

August

BANIXX
PET CARE
TUNDRA CAT

1st-14th

Win 1 of 4 feline wellness prize packs from **Banixx!** Includes a bottle of the Banixx Pet Care Spray, cat treats, cat toys, and catnip.

15th-31st

Win 1 of 3 **HandsOn Gloves**—the massage your cat will purr for! These gloves provide a more thorough shedding, bathing, and grooming experience for you and your feline!

September

1st-14th

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No purchase necessary to enter or win. Beginning April 1, 2023 at 12:01 AM (PST) through September 30, 2023 at 11:59 PM (PST), enter each day at moderncat.com/giveaways. Each biweekly giveaway ends at 11:59 PM (PST). Every two weeks, the specified number of winners for that giveaway will win the prize featured in the giveaway calendar (ARV: $200). Odds of winning depend on the number of entries received. Contest is open to legal Canadian and/or US residents 18 and older as of date of entry. Void in Puerto Rico and where prohibited by law. Giveaway subject to complete official rules available at moderncat.com/giveaways.

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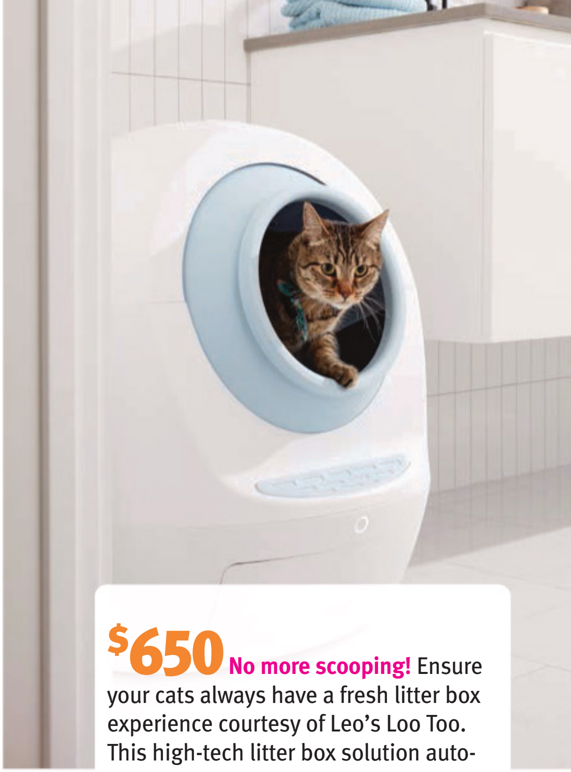

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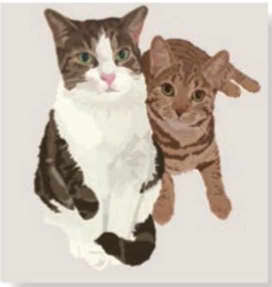

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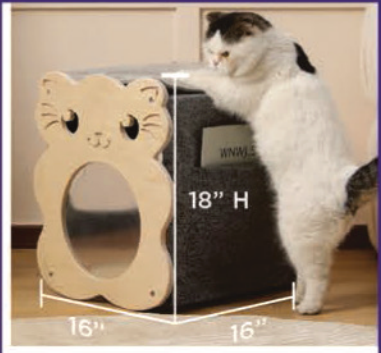

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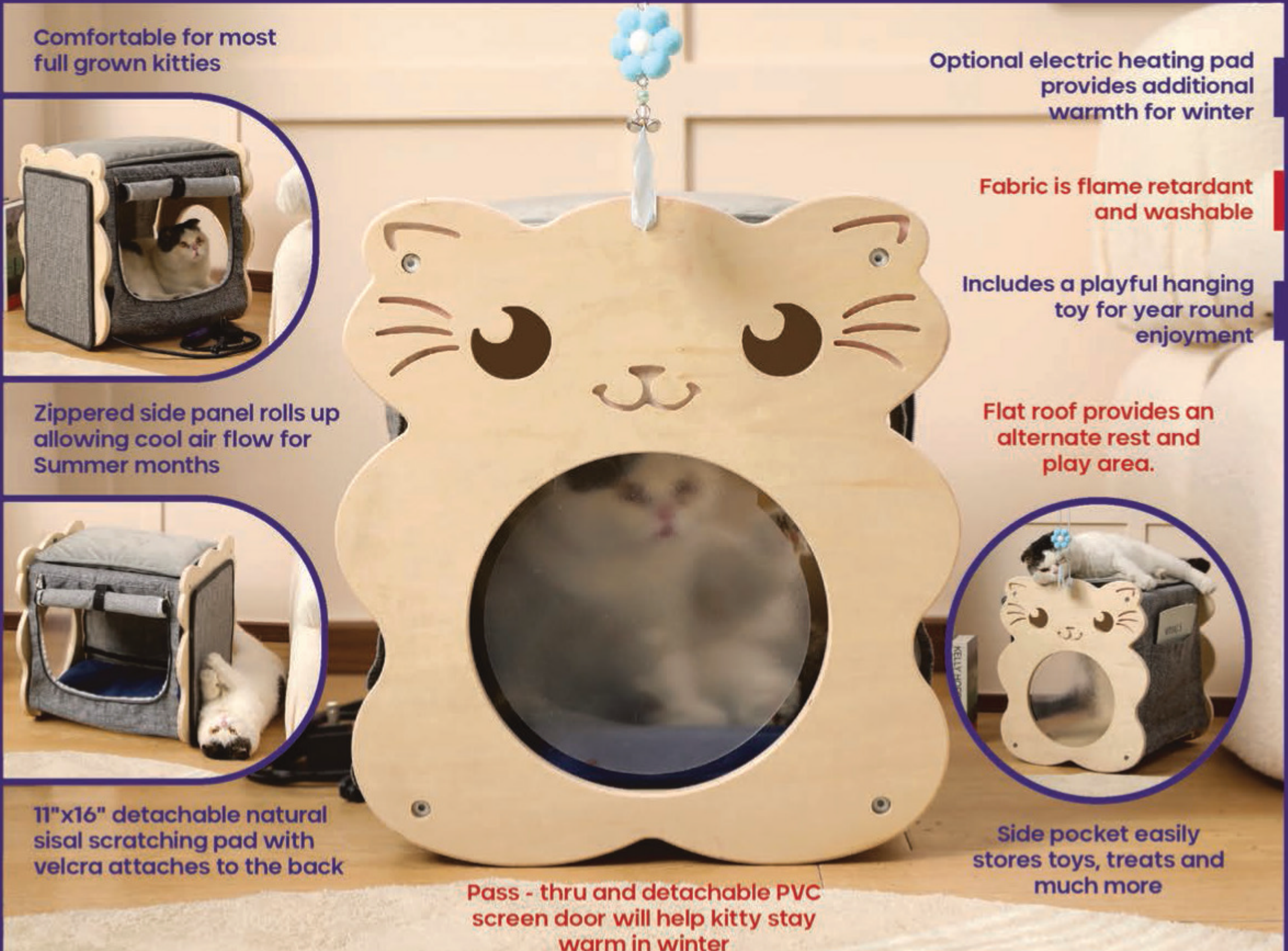

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Cat Lady

Guess I'll Stumble on Home to My Cats

A comprehensive history of Taylor Swift's cat family

By Eva Erhardt

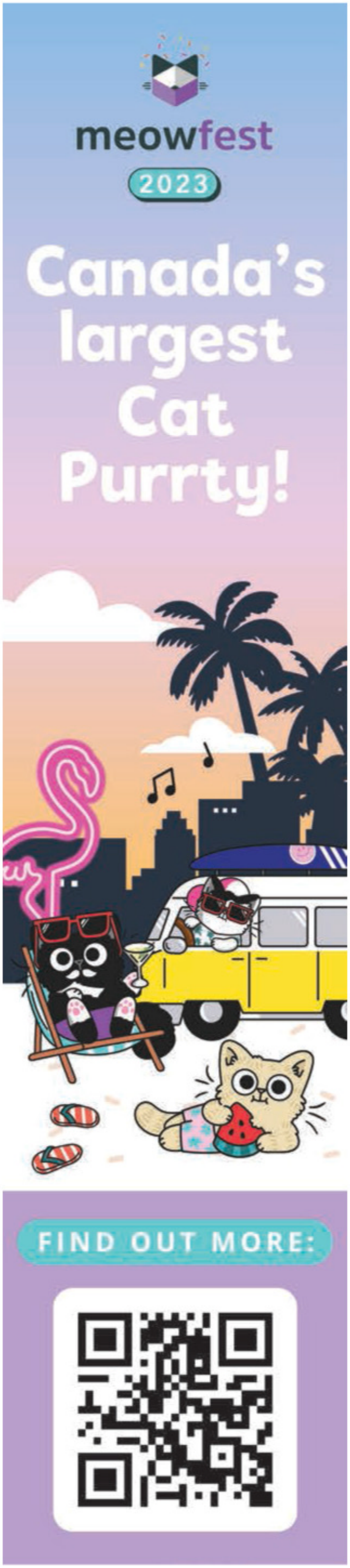
Illustration by Michelle Simpson

With the release of Taylor Swift's *Midnights,* she's been on the lips of most everyone with an internet connection. Combining her sold-out *Eras* tour with the highly acclaimed album, it seems like we're on our way to Swift World Domination. Does that mean her cats will rule with her?

Swift is a proclaimed "cat lady," citing the cuddly animal as what inspires her in an interview with *TIME.* "Number one for me, most influential factor in my life is cats. I have cats. I'm obsessed with them," she shared back in 2019. "They're really great. They're very dignified. They're independent. They're very capable of dealing with their own life, and if you fit into that on that day, they'll make some time for you maybe. I just really respect it."

According to Swift, she's felt this way since childhood. Growing up, she had two Siamese-Tabby mix cats named Indy and Eliehsen, who were said to have a deep connection with the pop singer. While in her late teens, Swift would call up her friends who were away at college so they could hear Indy and Eliehsen purr over the phone.

In 2011, Swift introduced the world to Meredith Grey, a Scottish Fold named after Ellen Pompeo's character in *Grey's Anatomy.* She was adopted on Halloween of that year, and since then, the cat has been solidly ingrained in Swift's life, appearing in social media



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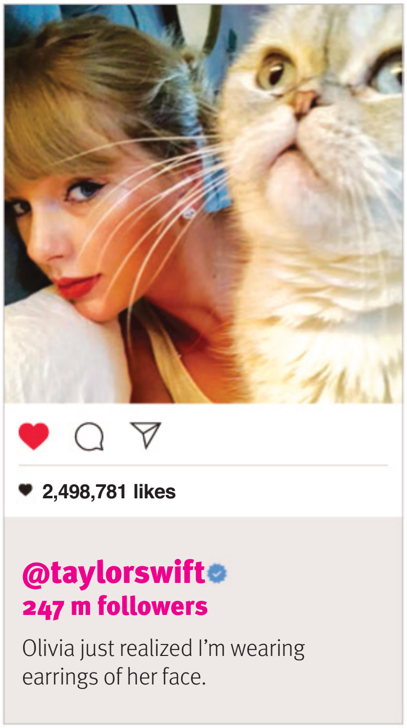


♥ 2,498,781 likes

@taylorswift
247 m followers

Olivia just realized I'm wearing earrings of her face.

posts, merch, and a cameo in the "ME!" music video. In 2018, she was even featured in Ryan Reynolds' *Deadpool 2* through a custom shirt with her face on it.

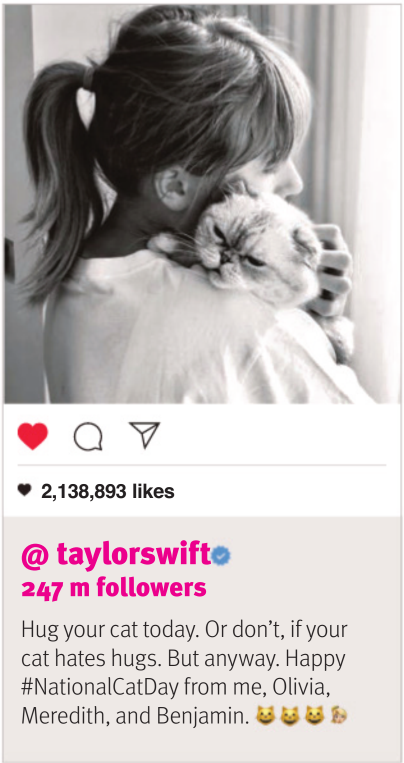
Her latest appearance was during Swift's TikTok series *Midnights Mayhem With Me,* where she unveiled the track titles for her then-upcoming album. Meredith, of course, made for a perfect co-host and meowed right on cue.

The next addition to the Swift family was in June of 2014, with the adoption of another Scottish Fold named Olivia Benson. This furry friend is also named after a television character, this time being from long-running crime drama, *Law & Order: SVU.*

Olivia Benson has also appeared in many of Swift's projects, including a Diet Coke commercial, the "Blank Space" music video, and exclusive "Taymojis" in the now-defunct "The Swift Life" app. Sounds like Miss Benson has been working hard! In fact, she's been so busy, that the "Ultimate Pet Rich List" names Olivia as the third richest pet in the world with a net worth of a whopping $97 million dollars.

Benjamin Button, a bicolour Ragdoll cat, is the "baby brother" of Olivia and Meredith. Swift met him on the set of the "ME!" music video, when co-star Brendon Urie handed him to her as an on-screen gift. After a few seconds of his purring, Swift decided that she didn't want to just adopt him in the music video, she wanted to adopt him in real life.

"He was just a cute kitten who didn't have a home," Swift said on an Instagram live, later covered by *People* magazine. "He was part of a program that tries to get cute kittens adopted by putting them in commercials and stuff. The handler handed me this tiny cat and he just starts purring and he looks at me like, 'You're my mom, and we're going to live together.' I fell in love. I looked at Brendon and he's like, 'You're going to get the cat, aren't you?"



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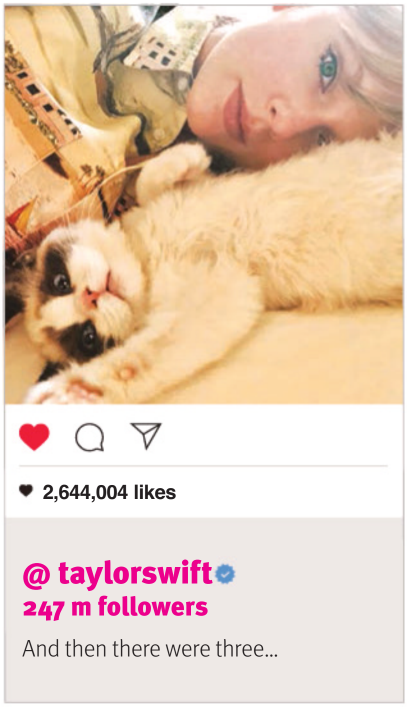
Hug your cat today. Or don't, if your cat hates hugs. But anyway. Happy #NationalCatDay from me, Olivia, Meredith, and Benjamin. 😺😺😺👱‍♀️



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And then there were three...

Since his adoption, "Benji" has appeared in more music videos, an ad for Amazon Music, and even an exclusive wristwatch from the Taylor Swift Merch store. Although he may not have the enormous income of his big sisters just yet, he's well on his way to stardom, with a solid place in Swift's heart. "I've never had a cat love people this much," Swift said about Benjamin in a behind-the-scenes video of "ME!". "I know kittens are cute, but that kitten is special."

Although Swift hasn't shared any plans to adopt any more felines, it's safe to assume that cats will remain in this "cat lady's" life forever. As she once said in an interview with Capital radio, "They can say whatever they want about my personal life because I know what my personal life is, and it involves a lot of TV and cats and girlfriends."■

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DREAM JOB:

Get Paid to Live on A Gorgeous Greek Island With 55 Cats

A viral job posting rocketed a Greek cat sanctuary to global fame. You can still apply for the position

By Cassie Gill

PHOTOS BOTH PAGES GOD'S LITTLE PEOPLE

Five years ago, the story of a small haven for cats and their caretakers in Syros, Greece became known the world over. A job posting looking for a cat caretaker at a sanctuary on a tiny Greek island went viral, amassing over 80,000 applications. Global media coverage of the phenomenon turned the sanctuary into a destination, leading to a Netflix episode and a newly released book.

Sanctuary founder Joan Bowell still can't quite believe it.

From her current perch on the stunning Greek island that houses the sanctuary, she recalls a formative childhood moment. "My mother brought home a kitten…and it was 'true love' at first sight that stuck with me ever since!" she laughs.

Though born and raised in Denmark, Bowell and her husband had dreamt of building a refuge on the Greek island of Syros for themselves and their two cats—but when they moved into their dream

home in Greece, they found other four-legged locals were joining the brood out of desperation.

"There were sick and starving cats everywhere and the cat population was so out of control with precious few people responding to their plight," she tells Modern Cat. From there, the sanctuary organically began to grow as Bowell began caring for more and more of the cats—totaling 30 in the first year.

"There is no way we could have ignored their plight, and our place very quickly went from just for ourselves, to us opening up basically our entire estate to create a safe haven for the cats."

She dubbed her cat sanctuary "God's Little People." The name, she says, comes from a quote by philosopher Pythagoras which says, "animals share with us the privilege of having a soul." He referred to humans as "God's big people" and animals as "God's little people," which strongly resonated with Bowell. "Humans are Gods to animals and so whenever humans mistreat an animal—that would be how the animal experiences God. This understanding lodged so deeply within me."

Her sanctuary might have continued to fly under the radar were it not for the job opening they posted to Facebook in 2018, seven years in:

> "PAID JOB OFFER WITH CATS! (this is genuine and NOT a joke — friends, please feel free to verify!)," the posting read. "A very special position and living circumstance on offer on a little Greek island called Syros (a small paradise no less!)" (Syros is located in the Aegean Sea to the Southeast of Athens, Greece.)

They thought they'd get a handful applications. They couldn't have been more wrong.

"Well, it was a totally unexpected experience, and we only became aware of it because a friend told us he'd just seen the news of it running across the screen on *BBC* news! We had put up a Facebook post looking for someone to take on the caretaker role here at our sanctuary, expecting that if we were lucky, we'd get

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maybe 20 people applying for the job," Bowell recalls.

Picked up by major media outlets like *BBC* and *CNN*, it took on a life of its own.

"We had no idea it was about to go viral the way it did...The attention was absolutely mind-boggling," she laughs. In just a month, Bowell and her husband got a whopping 80,000 applications for the position—an experience that she details in her new book, *God's Little People: Feelings That Connect*, and in episode five of the Netflix series *Cat People*.

The part-time, six-month position offered just €500 euro per month (equivalent to about $530 USD), but the perks were many—for the right person. Requiring about four hours a day of work, it involved feeding, cleaning up after, medicating, and loving on the 55 cats at the sanctuary. Housing, tranquility, and stunning scenery were included.

The posting read:

> "From experience, the job is most suitable for someone 45+ years of age, who's responsible, reliable, honest, practically inclined—and really, with a heart of gold! Apart from feeding the cats, the cats will also need heaps of love and attention. You will at times be expected to trap or handle a feral or non-sociable cat, so knowing something about a cat's psychology too is important and cat-whispering skills should come naturally to you."

If this sounds like you, there's still a chance you could live the dream of taking care of cats on a Greek island. Since the initial job posting, the Sanctuary has been choosing a new person for the position annually.

Most recently, Melinda Rundström, a vet nurse from Stockholm, Sweden, held the position.

"I saw the Netflix special and just fell in love with the environment from a distance and I admired Joan and Richard's values and ideas," says Rundström, who began following the sanctuary Facebook page. "Suddenly the job post was there. It was as if it was directed at me." The recently minted veterinary nurse had also been doing feline rescue work for about 20 years. "I thought it a perfect fit. It was also very good timing as I was feeling quite stressed and overwhelmed in my personal and professional life and could just benefit massively from a break and an adventure."

The experience was "*amazing*. It was lovely and strange and quite overwhelming and amazing. I didn't know to the full extent what I would be facing and it really became the adventure I was looking for."

Rundström has already been back twice since last summer. In June she's returning for a month.

"The surroundings are truly spectacular and relaxing. It's so beautiful and with the ocean quite near, the idyllic small towns of the island, the slower tempo.... it gives me peace of mind. The cats of the sanctuary and the stray colonies and I have formed a special bond—it's like visiting good friends every time."

Rundström's day starts with feeding the sanctuary cats, her favourite part. "The cats are all around, eager for food, and the sun is rising," she says. "There are little groups of cats throughout the sanctuary that need attending to." Some individuals need

PHOTOS GOD'S LITTLE PEOPLE

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medications or special diets. Others are in quarantine due to medical treatment. She'll clean their crates and litterboxes, then feed the two stray colonies nearby. "We try to spend as much time as we can with them too," says Rundström. "After the feeding, there might be scheduled veterinary visits or errands to run, like buying cat food. Usually, though there will be a few hours free for beach time or sightseeing around the island."

Spending time with the cats, the feeling of doing good work, and the sheer beauty of the place are the best parts, says Rundström, though she's quick to note the work component is very real. "The job is for somebody willing to work," she cautions. "It's for somebody with a true love for and understanding of cats. It's for somebody committed to the place… You need to be invested. It's an adventure but NOT a vacation. It's NOT a meet and greet with the famous couple from Netflix or a photoshoot for your social media. This job is for somebody who wants to do good. For people who want to contribute to a better world. It's a job for givers, not takers."

Still, the sanctuary has no shortage of applicants. "The job position has become extremely popular and desirable," says Bowell, who has expanded the original single position to a team. Caretakers stay for three to six months and rotate, with both new and return caretakers in the mix.

In addition to the caretakers, the sanctuary also accepts general volunteers to help out with different facets: the cats, the gardens, maintenance and upgrades—"basically people volunteering with a variety of skills," says Bowell.

Five years in from the viral posting, the sanctuary is still seeing blessings from the media attention—including more volunteers and more cat sponsors—but perhaps the biggest benefit was renewed faith.

"The most important thing we derived from this whole experience was realizing just how much goodwill there is towards cats in this world! So many people wanted to volunteer, and we realized just how many resources there are in this world to want to do good for cats," Bowell says, looking back at the last 12 years.

To date, over 3,000 kittens and cats have found refuge at her no-cage, no-kill sanctuary, which also operates as a registered charity and adoption center. Chronically ill and semi-feral cats also have homes for life at God's Little People.

While helping cats was her first priority with the sanctuary, Bowell also hoped to show others that it was possible to live in harmony with the felines. By providing water and food, as well as spaying and neutering, "it was possible to transform the outlook on the cats from being the unsightly sickly and emaciated pest they clearly were to the locals—hanging around the dumpsters scouring them for scraps," says Bowell. As the situation improved for the cats, locals began to take notice, and attitudes towards the cats changed, ultimately inspiring more community members to get involved in caring for the animals.

Bowell shares more of her emotional journey in her book, which she completed in eight intense weeks.

"Starting a cat rescue was a major step outside of my comfort zone, she says. "At the same time, it also felt like destiny was taking me by the hand and showing me that something as simple as love for cats can bring you on such a life-altering journey."

She hopes to inspire others to follow their hearts when it comes to their passions and beliefs.

"I'm not the first person to have done so, but I do believe that following your heart is the best way you could possibly ignite and inspire people around you to want to do well too…we might not all be able to do something on a large scale but we're all capable of small acts which together can lead to a big change." ■

Visit or Volunteer

The Cat Cuddling Café

is open June, July, and August. During summer weekends, guests get a guided tour of the sanctuary, then can sit and enjoy a spectacular sunset while cuddling cats and enjoying a refreshment. Visits are only upon request and can be booked at: *godslittlepeoplecatrescue.org*

Rental Villas Visitors can also book one of the rental villas on the sanctuary grounds. "We now get the most awesome guests staying in our villas," says Bowell. "They love being in a place where Greek cats are deeply cared for and loved. It's not uncommon that the sanctuary cats will go inside the villas and visit our guests—much to the delight of both our guests and the cats. A 100% win-win situation!"
Sanctuary villa booking: *sanctuaryvillasdelfini.com*

Volunteer "We post on Facebook whenever we're looking for caretakers and volunteers, so the best option for anyone interested is to actually follow us on social media," advises Bowell. "Our caretakers and volunteers are from all over the world and anyone with prior experience can apply, although we do get a lot more specific with regards to skills for our caretakers. We post about new caretakers a couple of times a year.

"I encourage people to persist if genuinely interested as the interest is huge, and it's obviously limited how many we can invite, but I'm just about to have a volunteer who's written again and again for the last two years, so patience pays off!"

PHOTOS GOD'S LITTLE PEOPLE

PROBLEM SOLVERS

Ingenious solutions to common cat-life problems

PROBLEM: DAILY LITTER BOX SCOOPING AND ODOUR

SOLUTION: Upgrade to the Leo's Loo Too and enjoy a smart litter box that **automatically sifts waste, controls odour, and includes remote monitoring** with the connected app. A huge step forward for cat families! ***smartypear.com***

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SOFT WOOD
CAT LITTER

PROBLEM: FINDING A SUSTAINABLE LITTER THAT REALLY WORKS!

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VETERINARIAN FORMULATED
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"Chill, Kitty Kitty"
Calming Soft Chews
2 mg CBD each

PROBLEM: FELINE STRESS

SOLUTION: Chill, Kitty Kitty soft chews are **enriched with broad-spectrum hemp, valerian root, and more to dial down stress-related behaviours.** These all-natural, veterinarian-formulated chews promote gentle relaxation without sedation. ***okoapet.com***

Vetericyn plus
ANTIMICROBIAL FELINE
FACIAL THERAPY
HEALING AID • SKIN REPAIR

PROBLEM: FELINE ACNE, ITCHY SKIN, AND FACIAL WOUNDS

SOLUTION: Vetericyn Plus Feline Antimicrobial Facial Therapy **aids healing and helps prevent infection in cat acne, cuts, and mouth sores, while also soothing itch and irritation** associated with allergies. Safe if licked or ingested, won't sting, and is antibiotic and steroid-free! ***vetericyn.com***

PROBLEM: LITTER TRACKING AND MORE

SOLUTION: The Grate Litter Box keeps litter tracking under control! A grate traps litter inside the box, high walls prevent urine leakage, a dividing wall keeps dogs out, the lid with a vent and filter reduces odours, and a hook holds your scoop. ***thegratelitterbox.com***

PROBLEM: EASING YOUR CAT'S DISCOMFORT AND ANXIETY

SOLUTION: Colorado Hemp Honey's Calming CBD Ear Balm **calms, soothes, and relaxes your cat.** This no-touch topical applicator can be applied directly to the skin to provide the benefits of CBD. ***coloradohemphoney.com***

BEE SOOTHED BEE HEALED BEE HAPPY
CALMING EAR BALM FOR PETS
WITH LAVENDER & PEPPERMINT

CBD + CATS

Veterinarians see promise in treating arthritic pain, itchiness, anxiety, and cancer

The use of CBD for pets has gone mainstream—and it's a huge business. Grandview Research estimates the 2022 global CBD pet market size at $195.98 million USD. But does CBD do all it is purported to do? And is it right for your cat?

There's a growing body of research looking specifically at CBD and pets, and the results are encouraging, especially for arthritic pain, itchiness, anxiety, and cancer.

"Cannabinoids can be beneficial for cats," say the directors of the Canadian Association of Veterinary Cannabinoid Medicine. "Certain diseases have been shown to respond well to cannabinoid therapy… the most common conditions for which we may consider CBD as a suitable part of a cat's treatment plan would be chronic pain, seizures (usually in addition to other anti-seizure medications), anxiety, chronic GI diseases, and allergic skin disease.

A tincture or oil-based extract or treats are currently the most common format to administer cannabinoids to pets. "In the future, should transdermal products with proven efficacy be developed, cats would no doubt benefit due to the ease of administration—as we all know how difficult some cats can be to medicate by mouth!" says CAVCM.

CAVCM recommends veterinary assessment to determine if CBD is a fit for your particular cat.

"Dosing should always be discussed with your pet's veterinarian," notes the CAVCM team, taking product, condition, and individual patient factors into consideration. Never give your cat CBD without your veterinarian's knowledge if your cat is taking other drugs. CBD may affect how drugs are metabolized, changing how the medications perform and possibly affecting the recommended dosage.

Choosing a CBD Product

WAS THE HEMP GROWN ORGANICALLY?

Independent analysis should confirm a lack of heavy-metal contamination and minimal THC levels (no more than 0.3%).

OUR PICKS

Treats & tinctures formulated especially for cats

EASE DISCOMFORT

The Feline Full Spectrum Hemp Tincture from Canine Hemp Solutions **combines 200 mg of hemp-derived full-spectrum Cannabinoid extract** with MCT oil to aid your cat with joint and muscle discomfort, promoting mobility, functionality, and overall wellness. **($45, *caninehempsolutions.com*)**

CALM

Soothe your anxious kitty with Okoa Pet's **"Chill, Kitty, Kitty" all-natural CBD-infused calming cat treats.** These soft chews are made with broad-spectrum hemp extract, catnip extract, and valerian root to calm your cat. All-natural ingredients like chicken liver, flax oil, and salmon bring the yum. **(from $25, *okoapet.com*)**

SOOTHE HIPS & JOINTS

The **Hip 'N' Joint Salmon-Flavoured Tincture** from Colorado Hemp Honey offers a powerful blend of full-spectrum hemp extract with naturally occurring CBD, bee propolis, and MCT coconut oil. It's formulated to soothe and comfort your cat while supporting general wellness. **(from $45, *coloradohemphoney.com*)**

INCREASE AGILITY

That'll Do pet CBD tincture from Orso Farms is made from certified organic CBD hemp and extracted through a solvent-free process to aid in a sense of calm, support physical comfort, and increase your pet's agility. The 10mg tincture is recommended for cats and small dogs. **(from $40, *thatlldopets.com*)**

PHOTO TOP LEFT VEERA/SHUTTERSTOCK

HOW TO TREAT A CAT SNAKE BITE

How to ID a snake bite and what to do if your cat was bitten

If you live in a region known to have poisonous snakes and your cat is allowed outdoors, it's important to know what to do if your cat is bitten by a snake.

Pit vipers, a group of venomous snakes that includes rattlesnakes, copperheads, and cottonmouths/water moccasins, are responsible for almost all venomous snakebites in the US and Canada. Identifiable characteristics of these snakes include retractable fangs, heat-sensing "pits" below the eyes, and elliptical-shaped pupils. (Thanks for the nightmares.) Rattlesnakes are responsible for most snakebite fatalities in North America.

HOW TO KNOW IF YOUR CAT WAS BITTEN BY A SNAKE

Bite locations tend to differ between dogs and cats. In cats, snakebites are more common on the front limbs, as cats are more likely to bat at snakes with their front paws. Dogs, in contrast, are more likely to sniff the snake, and thus are often bitten on the face or head.

Symptoms can appear right away or 12 - 24 hours after being bitten, and include:

- ✓ Bite marks
- ✓ Pain and swelling at the bite site
- ✓ Bleeding from the bite (may not clot properly due to anticoagulant properties of the venom)
- ✓ Slow or ragged breathing
- ✓ Limping (cats are most often bitten on the leg)
- ✓ Whimpering
- ✓ Sluggish behaviour
- ✓ Nausea
- ✓ Shock
- ✓ Muscle twitching or paralysis
- ✓ Discoloured tissue spreading from the bite site

TREATMENT

If you think a venomous snake bit your cat, seek immediate veterinary assistance. Call your vet to tell them you are en route. Try to keep your cat quiet and limit activity. Attempt to keep the bite site below heart level if possible. Do not attempt to treat your pet with tourniquets, suction, hot or cold packs, incisions, or anything else—these approaches are ineffective. Urgent, intensive veterinary treatment is necessary to limit long-term effects of the venom. Once at the vet, treatment recommendations may include administration of antivenin and supportive care (IV fluids and pain management).

ANTIVENIN
CROTALIDAE POLYVALENT
EQUINE ORIGIN
RATTLERANTIVENIN

If you live in a region where venomous snakes are common, check to see if your vet carries Rattler Antivenin from MG Biologics. It neutralizes venom from rattlesnakes, copperheads, and cottonmouths/water moccasins. Pre-mixed and ready-to-use, it counteracts the snake venom, decreases swelling, minimizes pain, and decreases temperature. Ask your vet to stock this in case of emergencies. ***(mgbiologics.com)***

PHOTO KRISTIAN BELL/SHUTTERSTOCK

NOT-SO-HOT SPOTS

If you notice your cat consistently scratching and chewing at a specific spot on their skin, a hot spot may be the culprit. Hot spots, also known as acute moist dermatitis, can be caused by: environmental allergies; food allergies; scrapes on the skin; mats; excess moisture on the skin and coat; insect bites from fleas, ticks, mites, and flies.

Hot spots are easy to identify by physically examining your cat. Cats with long, thick coats are more disposed to developing them. Keep an eye out for red and inflamed skin that literally feels hot to the touch.

Preventing hot spots from developing in the first place is ideal. This means maintaining your cat's coat, staying on top of flea and tick prevention, and monitoring your cat for signs of allergies.

If your cat has a hot spot, follow these steps:

#1: REMOVE THE FUR AROUND THE AFFECTED AREA

You'll need to trim or shave the fur around the hot spot. The area will likely be sore and sensitive, so you may want to contact your vet or a professional groomer to help.

#2: CLEAN & DISINFECT THE HOT SPOT

#3: APPLY A TOPICAL OINTMENT

Topical antibiotic or an anti-inflammatory medication can speed healing. Vet-prescribed oral antibiotics may be needed if the infection has spread.

#4: PREVENT YOUR CAT FROM CHEWING & LICKING THE AREA

If your cat won't stop worrying the hot spot, you may need an Elizabethan-type collar or an alternative like Suitcal (*suitical.com*) to keep them from chewing and licking the area.

#5: ADDRESS THE CAUSE

To prevent reoccurrence, you'll need to address the underlying cause. Your vet may be able to help you determine what factors are at play.

Itch Relief The ZYMOX Topical Cream provides itch relief and promotes healthy skin with a concentrated blend of protein, enzymes, skin soothing aloe vera, and hydrocortisone. Apply it directly to the problem area—especially the face, paws, or body folds—to soothe and heal hot spots. **($17, *zymox.com*)**

ZYMOX
Topical Cream

Hot Spot Prevention

Make sure your cat's coat is mat and tangle-free with the ConairPROPet cat slicker brush! The firm metal brush pins work through your cat's coat, removing loose hair and tangles to help avoid any skin and coat irritation that could lead to hot spots. **($9, *chewy.com* or *amazon.com*)**

Heal Hot Spots

BANIXX
• Ear Infection
• Hot Spots
• Ringworm
• Wounds

Banixx Pet Care Spray speeds healing, relieves dry, itchy skin, and treats hot spots, ear infections, ringworm, and wounds. Antiseptic and anti-fungal, it's made without steroids or antibiotics and is sting-free! **($15, *banixx.com*)**

The App that's an All-Star Pet Business Helper

Get those 5-star reviews with this app for pet businesses!

Do you have a pet-related business? If so, you need this app! Designed to help you create a strong online reputation, the Broadly app lets local pet-care businesses engage with leads and customers, streamline payments, and automatically request reviews—all from one app! Users are especially into the easy, seamless way it lets you increase reviews on Google, Facebook, and more, and stream them onto your own website to build credibility. How cool is that? Find it at *broadly.com/google-reviews*.

PHOTO TOP LEFT FRAU AUS UA/SHUTTERSTOCK; BOTTOM LEFT ABRILL/BIGSTOCK.COM

LOVE YOUR PET CHANGE YOUR PLANET
CATALYST
SUPERIOR ODOR CONTROL
UPCYCLED
SOFT WOOD
CAT LITTER
HEALTHY CAT FORMULA

Catalyst Pet is a completely sustainable, high-performance, clumping litter made of upcycled soft pine wood. Unlike clay litter, Catalyst is biodegradable, and it **doesn't produce harmful dust** that can potentially cause respiratory issues for cats. Healthy for your cats, and healthy for the planet! ***catalystpet.com***

Knowing your veterinarian stocks Rattler Antivenin (RAV) is the best strategy when addressing pet envenomation. Rattler Antivenin is for dogs, horses, and cats! It's an **all-in-one-Antivenin that treats envenomation** from all Crotalidae (copperheads, rattlesnakes, and cottonmouths/water moccasins). RAV is made in the USA, pre-mixed, and ready-to-use! ***mgbiologics.com***

Healthy Feline

Help your cat live their best life with these wellness products!

Looking for a cat food that doesn't compromise on quality? NOW FRESH recipes use simple ingredients, like **easy-to-digest fresh meats and fish and nutrient-rich fruits and veggies** that help maintain your cat's complete health. Made without by-product or meat meals, NOW FRESH has a taste cats just love! ***nowfresh.com***

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FRESH
grain-free recipe with turkey, salmon & duck

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FARM TO BOX CAT LITTER

Eco Farm to Box Cat Litter is **made with locally sourced, sustainably farmed soft red wheat and perennial rye.** Boxie Cat's farmers practice conservation tillage to promote climate and soil health, which **reduces CO2 emissions by 69%.** Eco is biodegradable and their recyclable packaging completes a life cycle that is gentler on the planet. ***boxiecat.com***

CatScan
GENETIC SCREENING FOR OVER 80 INHERITED DISEASES AND TRAITS

My CatScan is a comprehensive DNA test of 80 feline diseases and traits. Test DNA for genetic variants that cause inherited diseases and traits that will allow you to **care for treatable diseases, prepare for an emergency, predict future medical problems, and much more!** ***mycatscan.com***

Your feline friend is sure to love **these crunchy fish-shaped treats!** Bench & Field Pet Foods —Holistic Natural Feline Treats are Omega enriched from salmon oil and flaxseed. **Sardine, chicken, and salmon protein sources are the first ingredients** along with primary antioxidants like Vitamins E and A and Beta-Carotene. ***amazon.com/benchandfield***

BENCH & FIELD
Holistic Natural
with Added Vitamins and Minerals
Feline Treats

CAT EMERGENCIES:

11 SIGNS THAT YOU SHOULD TAKE YOUR CAT TO THE VET IMMEDIATELY

By Dr. Eleanor Flynn

As a veterinarian specializing in cats, one of the most common questions I get is if a cat's symptoms warrant a vet visit. In general, cats are masters of disguise, excellent at hiding the fact that they feel unwell. Often, by the time they show they are feeling poorly, they have been unwell for a while. This is a good reason to take your cat to the vet if you are worried about them. Furthermore, illness in the early stages is often easier and less expensive to treat, so there may be an unexpected cost in waiting to bring your cat to the vet.

A good example of this is a cat bite. Bites from other cats often become infected and cats can develop large abscesses at the site of the bite. If treated early with antibiotics, the abscess does not develop, and the cat is back to themselves after a few days of antibiotics. If left untreated, an abscess can develop, resulting in a large, open wound that may require surgery and will certainly require weeks of care. I see this on a regular basis at my job at the Oxford Cat Clinic, where clients bring their cats in with large wounds that could have been prevented, but the owner wanted to wait and see how the bite would be in a few days. In these cases, a small cost in the beginning can save a lot of money and headache in the long run.

There is also the welfare impact of waiting to consider. Cats who receive early treatment for illness and disease often suffer less and require less intervention than cats who are treated late.

PHOTO ESIN DENIZ/SHUTTERSTOCK

ILLUSTRATION SSSTOCKER/BOGSTOCK.COM

With all of this in mind, I have outlined 11 scenarios below where cat owners should urgently take their cat to the vet. This is not an exhaustive list, so you should always listen to your gut. If you are worried that something is wrong with your cat, you are probably right and should see your vet as soon as possible.

#1 Difficulty breathing:

If your cat is struggling to breathe or panting excessively, it's a medical emergency. This could be due to an asthma attack, pain, an allergic reaction, or fluid buildup in the lungs. Immediate veterinary attention is crucial.

#2 Severe injuries:

If your cat has been hit by a car, attacked by another animal, or fallen from a height, they could have internal injuries, broken bones, or be in considerable pain. Seek veterinary care as soon as possible.

#3 Ingesting toxic substances:

Cats are curious creatures and can ingest substances that are toxic to them, such as medications, cleaning products, or even plants, including the Lily plant, which is incredibly toxic to cats. Symptoms of poisoning can include vomiting, diarrhea, seizures, and tremors. Contact your vet immediately if you suspect your cat has ingested something toxic.

#4 Difficulty urinating:

If your cat is straining to urinate, vocalizing while trying to urinate, or not producing any urine, they may have a urinary blockage. This is a medical emergency and can be life-threatening or life-limiting if left untreated. This is particularly important in male cats where blockages of the urethra are common and can lead to irreversible kidney damage if not treated immediately. Any urinary irregularity in male cats should be treated as a medical emergency.

#5 Lethargy:

If your usually active and playful cat suddenly becomes lethargic and uninterested in their surroundings, it could be a sign of a more severe health issue. A vet should examine them to determine the cause of their behaviour.

PHOTO BOTTOM LEFT ANNANELIDOVA/BIGSTOCK.COM

#6 Loss of appetite:

Cats can be finicky eaters, but if your cat suddenly stops eating or drinking, it could indicate an underlying health issue. Loss of appetite can be a symptom of a variety of conditions, including kidney disease, digestive issues, pain, infection, or dental problems.

#7 Persistent vomiting or diarrhea:

Occasional vomiting or diarrhea can be normal for cats, but if it persists for more than a day, it's time to see the vet. Chronic vomiting or diarrhea can lead to dehydration and nutrient deficiencies, and it can be an indication of another underlying illness.

#8 Changes in behaviour:

If your cat suddenly starts hiding, avoiding interaction, or displaying aggression, it could indicate a medical issue. Changes in behaviour could also be due to stress or anxiety, so it's essential to get a veterinary evaluation to rule out any underlying health problems.

#9 Unexplained weight loss:

If your cat is losing weight despite having a healthy appetite, it could be a sign of an underlying health issue. Weight loss can be a symptom of many conditions, including hyperthyroidism, diabetes, cancer, or intestinal parasites.

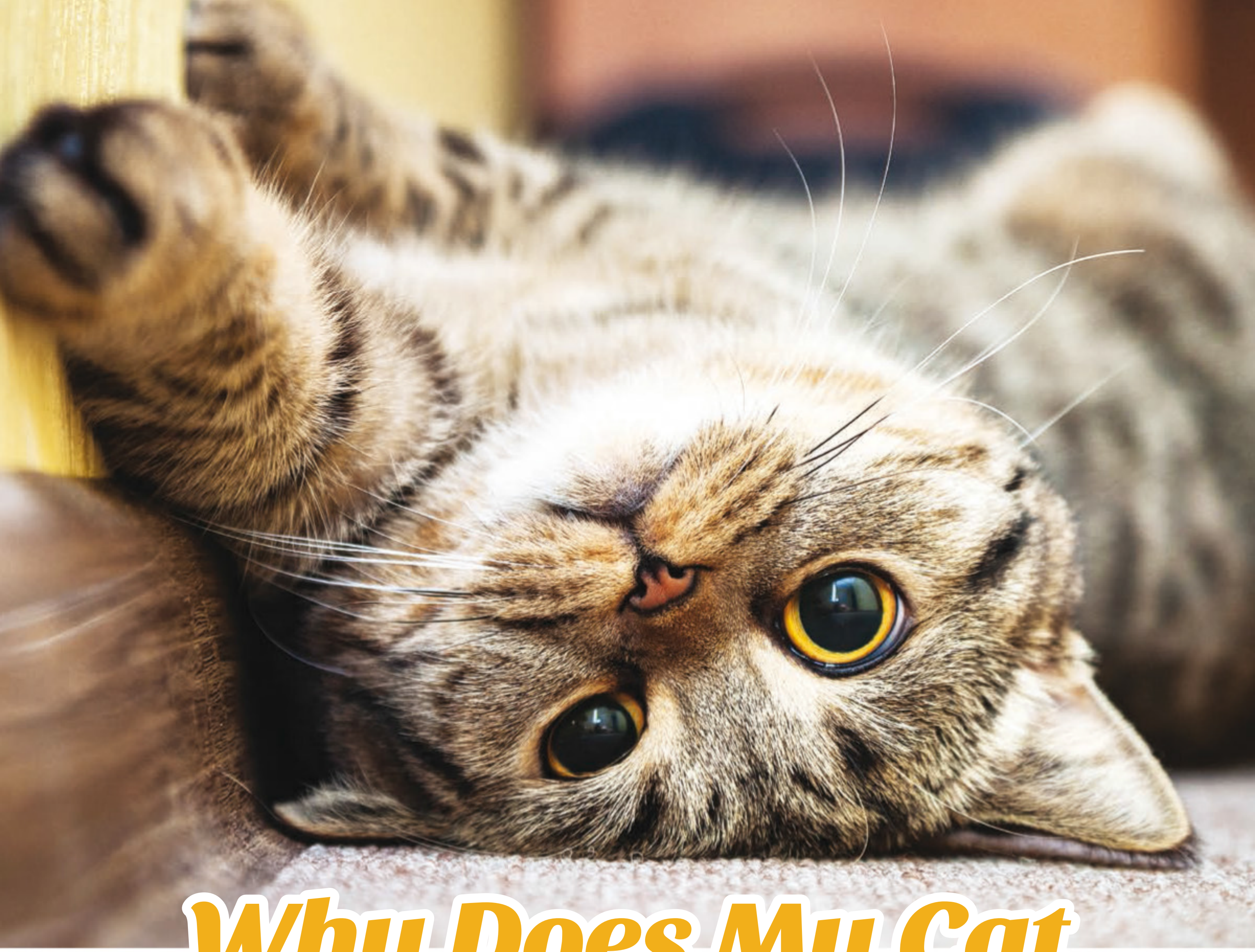
#10 Seizures:

If your cat experiences a seizure, seek veterinary care immediately. Seizures can be caused by a variety of underlying conditions including toxoplasmosis, epilepsy, brain tumors, or toxins.

#11 Sudden paralysis of the hind leg(s):

If your cat suddenly becomes unable to use one or both of their hind legs, it could be a sign of a serious medical condition such as a blood clot, a spinal cord injury, or nerve damage. This is a medical emergency and immediate veterinary attention is necessary. Ignoring this symptom or delaying treatment can lead to unnecessary pain and suffering for your cat or permanent damage to the affected limb(s).

As a responsible cat owner, it's crucial to be aware of the signs and symptoms that indicate a medical emergency in your feline friend. If you notice any of the above scenarios, don't hesitate to take your cat to the vet. Remember that early intervention can often make the difference in the outcome. ■



Why Does My Cat Do That?!

7 Instinctual Cat Behaviours That Baffle Cat Owners Explained!

By Mieshelle Nagelschneider,
Cat Behaviorist, T.V. Host for *My Cat from Hell*, and author of the first scholarly-cited cat behaviour science book for cat owners, *The Cat Whisperer*

1 Why Does My Cat Lick Me?

Cats have a huge social repertoire, which includes grooming (a.k.a. licking) other cats. But this behaviour doesn't always apply solely to other felines. Cats can groom other animals, like the family dog. It is also not unusual to see grooming behaviour directed towards humans in the home.

Cats living together establish a natural social organization, forming different relationships with one another and taking on different roles amongst themselves. This can also be true with the humans they live with. Your cat may see herself as your caretaker. This self-appointed role may include keeping up your hygiene! Grooming (licking) is also a bonding activity between cats. This is called communal grooming or allogrooming. Your cat may also be bonding with you as she licks away!

PHOTO TOP GREENART/SHUTTERSTOCK; BOTTOM LEFT CATERINATRI/BIGSTOCK.COM

PHOTOS LEFT VIANNA/BIGSTOCK.OM; RIGHT NYNKEVANHOLTEN/BIGSTOCK.COM

> *"While it's convenient to refer to house cats as domesticated animals, they're actually closer to what we call man's exploited captives, like deer, camels, and Asian elephants, or human symbionts like the rat or house sparrow. We don't consider these animals tame. Cats are otherworldly precisely because from a behavioural perspective they are still inherently wild in so many ways."*
>
> *—Excerpt from Mieshelle's book, The Cat Whisperer*

2 Why Does My Cat Lick and Then Bite Me?

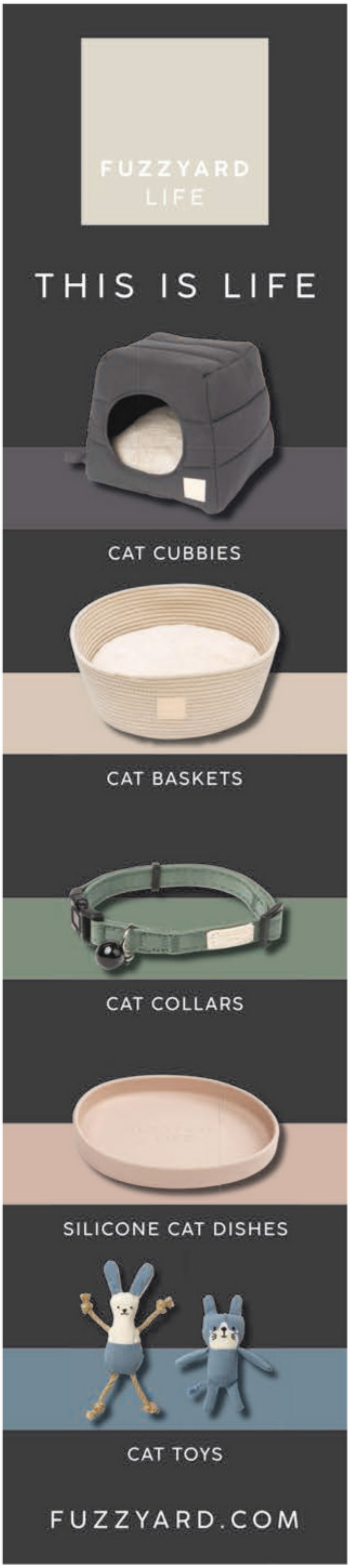
What does it mean when your cat licks your hand several times and then suddenly bites you? If your cat is a kitten, this is oftentimes normal play-biting behaviour. Kittens are more likely to play bite during a grooming session; this type of play aggression is a natural part of their social development and nothing to worry about. If your cat is an adult, they may be trying to solicit play. Cats naturally play-fight with other cats, and 35 percent of communal grooming sessions lead to a friendly bite on the opposing cat with the hopes of a round of play-fighting. If you've ever seen your cat lick another cat behind the ear and then bite their neck, you have just witnessed the beginning of normal play-fighting behaviour. Cats can develop this repertoire with their humans (or any species). This is especially true if there are no other cats in the home. You can reciprocate the behaviour by petting or brushing your cat and this can promote a closer bond between you.

3 Yowling with Cat Toy in Mouth

Carrying a cat toy in their mouth while meowing or yowling is a very common, instinctual cat behaviour. This behaviour can happen any time of day, but you may notice it more in the evenings. This is when the moon comes out from behind the clouds and your cat's prey drive has been activated. Many cat owners are perplexed as to why their cats behave this way and often believe their cat is "mothering" the cat toy like a baby, but this couldn't be further from the truth! Instead, your cat carrying their "prey" in their mouth while vocalizing means your cat is in full prey-drive mode. Yowling in the evening while carrying no toy is a variation on this behaviour. If you see this, you may need to purchase new cat toys.

4 Staring at the Wall for No Apparent Reason

Witnessing a cat staring at a wall for an inordinate amount of time for what appears to be no logical reason can be both intriguing and worrisome for cat owners. I think I've heard every possible hypothesis as to why cats are



> "Yowling in the evening while carrying no toy is a variation on this behaviour. If you see this, you may need to purchase new cat toys."

behaving this way. There is always, at least for the cat, a logical reason for the behaviour. Your cat is seeing, hearing, or smelling something that has caught their interest and may have activated their prey drive. Cats really do have a bionic sense of hearing and smelling. A shadow or a light reflection shimmering on the wall, a bug or dark spot that looks like a bug, or a mouse inside your wall are common reasons for the behaviour. The most exciting feeling a cat can feel is when they can hear prey but not see it. This activates a cat's seeking circuit, located in the reward circuit of their brain. All the feel-good brain chemicals start flowing, and it's one of the best feelings a cat can experience.

5 Running out of the Litter Box at Full Speed

There can be several reasons for a cat running out of the litter box at full speed as though being chased by an imaginary dragon, but it's usually nothing to worry about. In fact, this behaviour is one of the most common cat owners ask me about. If your litter box is hidden in a corner in the laundry room or in the dark basement under the stairs, your cat's fleeing behaviour may be about safety and to literally get out of the area fast to ensure survival. Other cats become playful, digging around in the litter substrate, and this can activate their play behaviour, causing them to zoom out of the litter box. This is commonly seen in kittens and cats under two years of age. If your cat is experiencing distress while defecating or having pain while urinating, this can also cause them to vacate the litter box quickly. If your litter box is dirty and needs changing or you don't scoop once or twice daily, this can also cause the "Porta-Potty" effect (a.k.a. get out as fast as you can).

6 Unexplained Meowing in the Evenings

Does your cat ever sit at the top of the stairs late at night vocalizing with a trance-like look in their eyes? Maybe they pace from room to room in the evenings, meowing for no apparent reason. Many cat owners are mystified by this behaviour. Again, you have their prey drive to thank for this one. Cats are crepuscular, meaning they are instinctively more active hunting prey during twilight hours. Know that your cat is thriving in their environment when you see a natural behaviour like this surface. Many cats might need a little nudging by their owners in order to activate their prey drive. Don't worry if your cat doesn't meow in the evenings, but do provide various wanded toys, cat tunnels, even empty Amazon boxes, and play with your cat. Avoid monotony. Your cat's brain is designed to live in an environment that provides varied "terrain" and "prey."

7 Placing Cat Toys in Food or Water Bowl

Placing cat toys in their food or water bowl is a very instinctual behaviour in cats. Cats will often immobilize their "kill" so that it will not escape. Next time you see a stuffed toy mouse in the water bowl, don't be alarmed. Depositing a crinkle ball toy in their food bowl can also mean a cat's doing what's logical to him – taking the "food" to the food area. ■

PHOTO TOP NASTYAOFLY/BIGSTOCK.COM; MIDDLE LEFT NADIN76/BIGSTOCK.COM; BOTTOM LEFT NEW AFRICABIGSTOCK.COM; BOTTOM CENTRE VLADIMIR GUDVINBI/BIGSTOCK.COM; ILLUSTRATION BOTTOM RIGHT SPICYTRUFFEL/BIGSTOCK.COM

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A Cat Lovers Café

Catoro cat café serves up caffeine and cat cuddles

By Camille Lemos & Yaunna Sommersby

PHOTOS TOP LEFT AND MIDDLE LEFT YAUNNA SOMMERSBY; TOP CENTRE, TOP RIGHT AND BOTTOM COURTESY OF CATORO PETS

"When I walk into work every morning, I'm greeted by my 25 furry bosses," says Daniel Wilson, co-owner of Vancouver, BC's Catoro Cat Café along with partner Annah van Eeghen. "That's what gives me the energy to keep pushing and advocating for all the cats in the world that don't have a voice." Help they have—since the café's inception in 2019, Catoro has adopted out almost 900 cats.

An average weekend day sees 120 visitors paying $18 each to come visit and hang out with the kitties. Spots are limited and reservations are needed. The admission price directly supports the rescue work, operation, and care of the felines in residence. You can purchase refreshments like milk tea and cat supplies, but the real draw, of course, is the cats.

"I think people come to cat cafés for a couple of reasons," says Wilson. "First, I think the novelty of the experience is fun and exciting for a lot of people. You don't often get the chance to interact with that many cats in the same environment. Secondly, I think people value time spent with animals. The sense of connection it provides is incredibly therapeutic, and we have a lot of amazing regular customers who love coming here to spend time with the cats."

Regular patron-turned-volunteer Daniel Li adopted two of his cats, Minnie and

Catoro Cafe

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Cinnamon, from Catoro. He began spending time there because of the relaxing environment and access to animal therapy via cats, he says. “Honestly, everything about it makes me happy,” says Li. “The staff there are lovely and you can tell just how much they care about what they do. The environment is comfortable, with peaceful music and cats that actually feel like they’re somewhere they can be themselves. Knowing that you’re able to be a part of this experience of helping cats that have had rougher lives really makes the experience more special.”

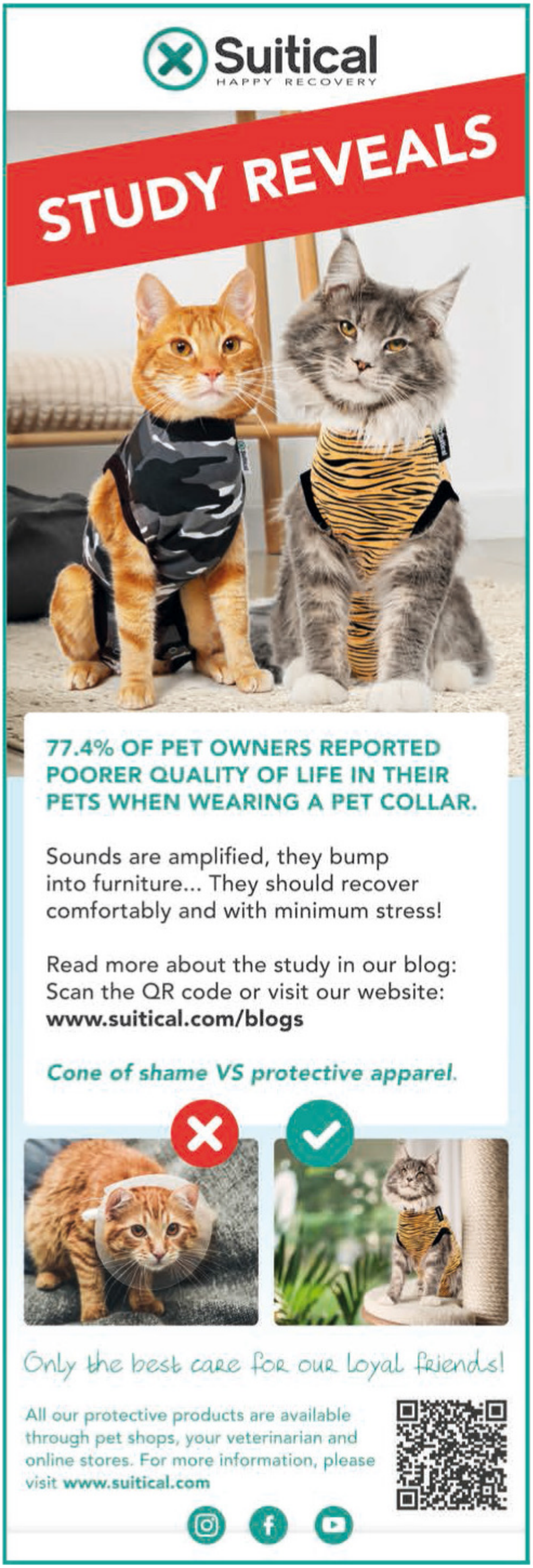
Indisputably, Catoro has created an invested community of cat lovers—one that saved them from closure earlier this year. Struggling post-pandemic with rising business and cat care costs and a break-in attempt that caused major damage to their front windows, the Catoro team launched a successful GoFundMe in January and raised $100k in six days. Crisis averted.

Taking stock of their journey thus far, “it’s hard to pick one accomplishment but if I had to narrow it down it would be a few things,” says Wilson. “Having a community that cares so deeply about Catoro that they saved us this year from closing, and helping people and kitties realize that they are deserving of love are definitely high on my list.”

And then there are the cats.

“The best part of running a cat cafe is definitely watching cats evolve while they are here—they are often scared and anxious and sometimes feral when they come in, but they really blossom into friendly, snuggly, relaxed cats who move on to loving forever homes. Watching people experience the joy of bonding with a cat is really special too.” ■

PHOTO COURTESY OF CATORO PETS



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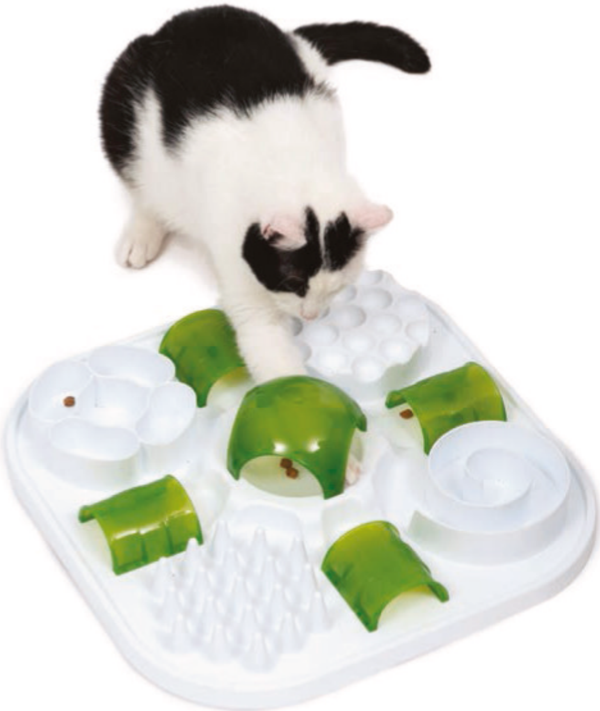
Brain Games for Cats

For indoor cats, environment enrichment is the name of the game. These expert tips will help you provide a rich, stimulating home to keep your cat engaged and happy

By Rose Frosek



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#3 Play to your cat's natural instincts.

The **Tiger Diner ceramic food dish** from Pioneer Pet is designed to allow your cat or kitten to "catch" their food, appealing to their natural instinct to use their paws to capture their dinner. The easy-to-fill funnel-shaped bowl automatically distributes food as needed, providing a challenging activity that appeals to cats' natural love of hunting and provides mental and physical stimulation by bringing out natural predatory behaviours. Bonus: it also makes cats eat at a healthier speed. **$27, *pioneerpet.com***

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Yeowww!
catnip
Yeowww!
Yeowww!

If your cat doesn't respond to catnip, no worries—they simply don't have the "catnip gene." Catnip receptivity doesn't emerge until a cat is between three and six months old; until then, a kitten will not have a response. Sensitivity to this herb is hereditary—an estimated 50 percent of cats have no reaction, states the Humane Society of the United States.

For cats that are 'meh' about catnip or if you'd just like to mix it up a bit, try a plant called silvervine. This potent alternative to catnip generates an ecstatic response. **Try Eco-Kitty's Silver Vine Activity Balls,** made of 100% Shredded Silver Vine held together with natural gum. Its potent fragrance stimulates and excites cats. **$17, *defineplanet.com***

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Mau Pets' Uni cat tree. ($279, maupets.com)

Expert Tips to Help You Find the Right Cat Tree

Why cats need cat trees and how to find the perfect cat tree for your cat

By Tracey Tong

Cats are unique creatures—they are ferocious hunters, yet like to hide. They want to be around family, yet crave their own space. Both predator and prey, our feline friends are a study in opposites, which is one of the reasons why we love them.

"Cats haven't evolved all that much from their wild ancestors," says LeeAnna Buis, a Seattle-based certified feline training and behaviour consultant with Feline Behavior Solutions. "They still have many of the same instinctual needs [as wild cats], and cat trees meet quite a few of those needs in a great way."

Offering a safe, secure vantage point and a great ambushing spot all in one, cat trees give cats outlets to perform their natural and desired behaviours, which in turn decreases their stress, says Ingrid Johnson, certified cat behaviour consultant and owner of Fundamentally Feline in Atlanta, GA. "As a whole, we force cats to comply to a very human world. Cat trees are one way we can actually allow our cats to be cats."

Here, Modern Cat's experts share which features to consider when choosing a cat tree—and why.

Choosing a Cat Tree

Cat trees offer safe, solo napping spots, high-up vantage points, feeding stations away from dogs and kids, and the ability to avoid conflict with other animal housemates. They also provide enrichment, says Johnson, in the form of scratching, a spot to birdwatch and sunbathe (if the pet parents have put the tree near a window), and can be great for interactive play. "If your cat is trained, it can be an obstacle course or agility circuit for clicker training behaviours," she says.

Scent and Second-hand Cat Trees

Cats have a very sensitive sense of smell, so ensure the cat tree has no scent, says Dr. Kira Ramdas, DVM and President of the American Association of Feline Practitioners. For this reason, the Woodlands, TX-based vet advises avoiding second-hand cat trees. "They have other cats' smells on them, which can be very upsetting, not to mention they can come complete with fleas and flea eggs from the previous home."

Height

Vertical space is imperative for cats, says Johnson. Height offers a place of security, a chance to survey an entire space, and allows for successful avoidance of other cats, dogs, and crawling toddlers. "Height is comfort and power to cats," Johnson says. "Height can even help with establishing hierarchy among cats within the home."

As cats are also predators, being up off the ground provides a vantage point for spotting and stalking prey, Buis says. It is also wonderful enrichment. "It expands their living space because, unlike us, they can climb, lounge, and sleep on small perches up in the air," Buis says.

So how high should you go? "The taller the better, as it offers more choices," says Johnson. "Your cats do not have to go high if they do not want to, but the option is there."

Catit's Vesper Treehouse in size large. ($400, catit.ca)

Hiding and Sleeping Spots

If your cat is a hider, Johnson suggests choosing a tree with a cave or dome-like cubby. These features are great for nap time, says Buis. "Make sure they're large enough that your cat can get in and turn around comfortably."

Armarkat Classic Cat Tree A7204 with four play features. ($209, armarkat.com)

Scratching Surfaces

As scratching is a normal behaviour in cats for which you need to provide sanctioned outlets, you'll want this feature in your cat tree. Scratching allows cats to keep their claws groomed by removing old nail sheaths. It also allows continued mobility of the claws and provides opportunities to stretch, Ramdas says. "Cats also use scratching as a form of visual and olfactory communication with other cats," Ramdas says, "with pheromones deposited to allow other cats to know how recently they were there." This helps cats in a multi-cat house "timeshare" the cat tree.

Keep in mind the direction your cat likes to scratch — horizontally, vertically, or on an incline, and look for planes that cater to this preference. The scratching area needs to be minimally taller/longer than the height/length of the cat fully grown, so that your cat can stretch to its full height/length and pull down, Ramdas says.

Texture Preferences

Cats are all individuals and have different texture preferences. Sisal is the number one substrate cats prefer, but some cats also like natural wood, tree limbs (with bark), and corrugated cardboard, says Johnson. "I once knew a cat who preferred to scratch denim, so their pet parent wrapped an old pair of jeans around a piece of wood and made a homemade post out of her cats preferred substrate." To find out your cat's preferred texture, get a few inexpensive scratching surfaces (posts, mats, ramps, etc.) and see what your cat prefers, says Buis.

If your cat likes scratching carpet, however, try to avoid this material on the scratching area, and try to choose a cat tree that has carpet on sleeping surfaces only. "I try to discourage the use of fuzzy tufted carpeted substrates as scratching options," says Johnson. "It may send a mixed message and may contribute to the scratching of carpeting in the home that is unwanted."

Your Cat's Size vs. the Cat Tree

All trees need to not wobble and wiggle when in use, says Johnson. "Cats do not feel safe climbing a swaying cat tree." Proper assembly of any cat tree is essential, Johnson says, "and cat trees often need to be tightened up from time to time."

A larger cat will need a tree sturdy enough to support it—look for a wider, heavier base, as well as larger platforms. "A big cat isn't going to be comfortable on a tiny perch,” says Buis. “A cat who goes zooming through the home and launches through the air to land on the cat tree isn’t going to do well with a light, flimsy tree. Both of these cats might prefer something really solid or, better yet, secured to the wall so it can’t sway or tip.” This is also true if you have cats who play together on the tree. “As long as it fits your cat’s furry backside and is nice and sturdy, size can vary,” Buis says.

Cat Trees and Your Cat’s Age and Abilities

Many commercial cat trees are too small and more designed for kittens, says Johnson. “It is essential to purchase trees that will accommodate your cat throughout their life stages. Cats are not squirrels; they cannot have one level stacked directly on top of another. The tree levels should be spaced apart in such a way that they are accessible to all life stages and handicapped status.” Cats with disabilities, arthritis, and other mobility issues may need perches that are larger, lower, and closer together with more horizontal scratching areas, Ramdas says.

Cat Trees for Multiple Cats

Whether a cat will share a tree with other cats or prefer to have their own depends on the cat, says Buis. “Or they may prefer timesharing.” Buis suggests that if space allows, “multiple cat trees can help create an enriching environment for your cat, even in single-cat homes.” Ramdas agrees. “Ideally, each cat would have their own as this is likely to be a coveted resource,” she says. “Some will tolerate sharing if there are enough vertical perches to share, or if there are other coveted vertical spaces (shelves, window sills, furniture) they can perch on instead, and their own separate scratching resources (pads, furniture, toys, posts). Ramdas suggests a separate tree, or at least, one perch and one cubby per cat.

Vetreska Blooming Cactus Cat Tree. ($190, vetreskanyc.com)

If you don’t have room for more than one cat tree, Buis suggests installing cat shelves or climbing poles that take up less space.

Where to Place Your Cat Tree

Put your cat tree where the family spends most of its time, like a living room. Placed near a window, a cat tree can offer a good vantage point for bird or squirrel watching and provide enrichment, says Ramdas, “with the only caveat being that if stray cats are present outdoors and viewed easily from the windows—it may cause frustration in your cat, witnessing the stray cat in its perceived environment.”

Location plays a big part in whether your cat will use their tree. “A tree near a window will likely get more use than one in the corner of a back room where no one ever goes,’ Buis says. Similarly, a tree near a litter box or a kids’ play area may not be as appealing as a cleaner, quieter location.

When it’s Time For a New Tree

Whether you need to replace your cat tree is highly variable based on use, says Johnson. “I have 20-year-old trees that still look new.” If it’s just a case of boredom—after a while, it becomes so familiar that it is no longer a curiosity, Johnson says—you can change up a cat tree by hiding treats, using scent enrichment like catnip, or food puzzle toys on the tree if the space allows.

The cat tree will need some upkeep. “Perches and cubbies may need de-furring or sanitizing,” says Buis. “If they pull out strings from scratching, those may need to be trimmed. If it’s been shredded to the point that your cat can chew on and ingest fibers, or it has become unstable, it’s a good idea to upgrade or make some repairs.”

When changing trees, Johnson suggests offering choice and doing it gradually. “Place the new tree next to the old tree,” she says. “Use scent enrichment like catnip, silvervine, Tartarian honeysuckle etc. and treats to entice them over to the tree.”

If the cat is still attached to the original, try slowly moving it out of the area a little at a time, says Buis, and moving the new tree into that spot. “You can also rub your cat’s cheeks and shoulders with a towel and rub that towel on the new tree to spread their scent.” Once they are preferring the new tree, you can remove the old one.

So… Do You Need a Cat Tree?

At the end of the day, cats don’t necessarily need a cat tree, says Ramdas. “What they need are suitable and appropriate vertical and horizontal surfaces to scratch, and vertical space where they can view what is going on below them, or outside windows and feel safe.” “Vertical space is imperative regardless of the size of the home,” Johnson agrees. A cat tree is often the easiest way to achieve this.

Cat trees help meet many instinctual needs for cats, Buis says. “If your deepest, most engrained needs aren’t met, your stress levels rise. The more we can do to meet our cats’ natural, instinctual needs, the lower their stress will be and the more they’ll enjoy life.” And isn’t that what we all want for our cats? ■

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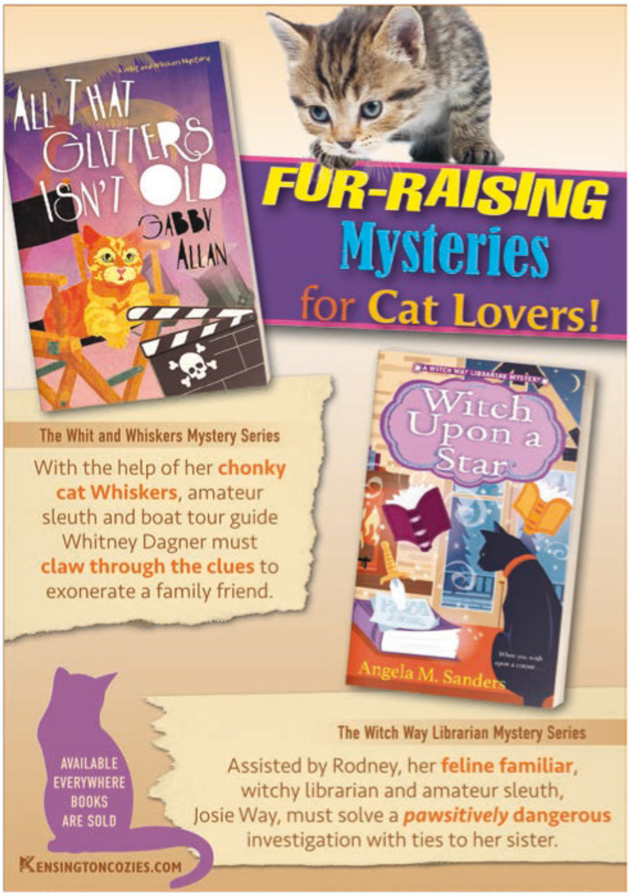

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BRING ON THE CUTENESS!

Foster Kittens 101

How you can help the tiniest cats

By Rose Frosek

Hannah Shaw, a humane educator known as Kitten Lady, knows pretty much everything about helping orphaned kittens. She's spent the last 14 years helping countless kittens survive the first weeks of life and find forever homes. Her specialty is neonates or "bottle babies."

As the founder of the non-profit Orphan Kitten Club, she encourages cat lovers to consider fostering. "Even if all you can do is foster for a week, that alone can be a huge help during kitten season," says Shaw, referencing the time of year—typically early spring to mid-fall—when shelters are overwhelmed by an influx of kittens. Worried about how your resident cat will react to foster kitten interlopers? Don't be, says Shaw, who has the following advice:

Q Can you foster kittens if you have your own cats at home? Are most adult cats accepting of kittens?

A Most people who foster kittens have cats of their own—including me! It can be easily done as long as you understand some simple protocols. The first thing to understand is that foster kittens will usually have an unknown health history, meaning that they may have been recently exposed to parasites, viruses, and other transmissible diseases, which can pop up over their first days with you, even if they appear healthy at the time you take them home. For that reason, I highly recommend a quarantine period of at least two weeks, during which your foster kittens are kept in a separate space from your resident cats, such as a separate room or a playpen that zips shut. You don't want anyone "booping" noses or licking butts until the kittens have been with you for at least two weeks, after which it's generally safer to allow them to meet.

After that, it's really up to your cat! Many cats won't want to befriend foster kittens, which is totally okay! Fostering kittens is such a short-term thing that integration is not the goal at all; the goal is to provide a safe space for the kittens to quarantine, grow, heal, learn, and become robust enough to get adopted a few weeks later. If your cat isn't accepting of fosters, that's totally fine; I recommend keeping them in a separate space or in a playpen in the corner of a room, as far from where your cat hangs out as possible. Cats will almost always choose avoidance over aggression when it comes to kittens, so give them the option to avoid and they will. Of course, if your cat is seeming curious, or begging to befriend your fosters, that's a total bonus for their enrichment and socialization! Just make sure you're keeping everyone—including your resident cats—up to date on vaccines and only letting them meet after the quarantine period has passed.

Q How much work is it? How long do you usually keep fosters for?

A You can foster kittens for as little as a few days or as long as a few months, depending on your availability and the needs of the kittens. In general, kittens stay with their foster parents until they are at least eight weeks old, after which they can be sterilized and move into their adoptive homes. But every program is different, as is every situation! Whatever time you have available, don't be afraid to reach out and offer to help your local shelter!

* Shaw is also the author of several cat books, including *Tiny But Mighty: Kitten Lady's Guide to Saving the Most Vulnerable Felines,* an invaluable (and very cute!) guide to helping orphaned kittens.

PHOTOS ANDREW MARTTILA

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CAT DOCS

Netflix and chill with your cat: a trio of recent, award-winning cat documentaries are must-stream viewing for cat lovers

By Tracey Tong

PHOTOS TOP AND BOTTOM RIGHT MYE HOANG

A plethora of incredible cat documentaries have taken over the small screen. These three recent, critically acclaimed releases—*Cat Daddies, Cat People,* and *Inside the Mind of a Cat*—all get two (non-opposable) thumbs up. Cuddle up with your feline friends and prepare to be entertained.

CAT DADDIES (2022)

"IRRESISTIBLY CHARMING
CAT
DADDIES

Forget the stereotype of single ladies surrounded by cats. The men in director and co-producer Mye Hoang's debut documentary feature are all proud cat daddies, a diverse group of men whose lives have been changed by their feline friends.

This heartwarming portrait of male cat ownership offers a look into the lives of male cat owners during the challenging early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, when people needed hope and companionship. Nine cat dads from all walks of life—a firefighter, a truck driver, a

Hollywood stuntman, an ad executive-turned-cat rescuer, a police officer, a software engineer, an actor/Instagram influencer, a school teacher and a disabled immigrant living on the streets of New York City—each shares their story of unconditional love for their cats.

Hoang—herself a cat lover and owner of six former strays—wanted to demonstrate that being a cat person has no gender. "I've always loved seeing images of men holding and loving their cats," says the L.A.-based filmmaker. "I think a lot of men can love cats but don't have the personal experience to realize this."

One of her goals for *Cat Daddies* was to dispel current ideas of what manliness looks like. Men and cats can have a bond just like a man and a dog, Hoang says. "I think people don't know just how affectionate, emotional, and loyal cats can be."

The featured cats also challenge what cats are able to do. Tora goes off-roading in a Jeep in Arizona; Zulu jumps into Hoang's open car as soon as they meet; many of the cats wear custom creations sewn by their male owners.

Each duo shares a deep bond. Firefighter Jordan Lide says he doesn't know what each day on the job will bring but that petting his cat brings his blood pressure down. David Giovanni, who had been homeless for two years, and his cat, Lucky—whom he credits with saving his life—have an especially touching story. "He feels incredibly lucky, even in his situation, because of that unconditional love he has with his cat," says Hoang. "And the film has attracted even more friends and strangers that love him and root for him." A police officer who is friendly with the homeless man is a fellow cat dad. The pair find commonality in talking about their cats.

A winner at a multitude of international and indie film fests, *Cat Daddies* is a crowd favourite. "With the rise of cat conventions and cat video festivals, I knew a cinematic documentary about cats was a great way to bring the cat community together," says Hoang. "I love the energy when cat people gather. There's nothing else like it."

*** Available on demand on Amazon in the U.S. and Apple TV in Canada.**

PHOTO TOP RIGHT ROBERT BENNETT; BELOW LEFT BIRDO/NETFLIX

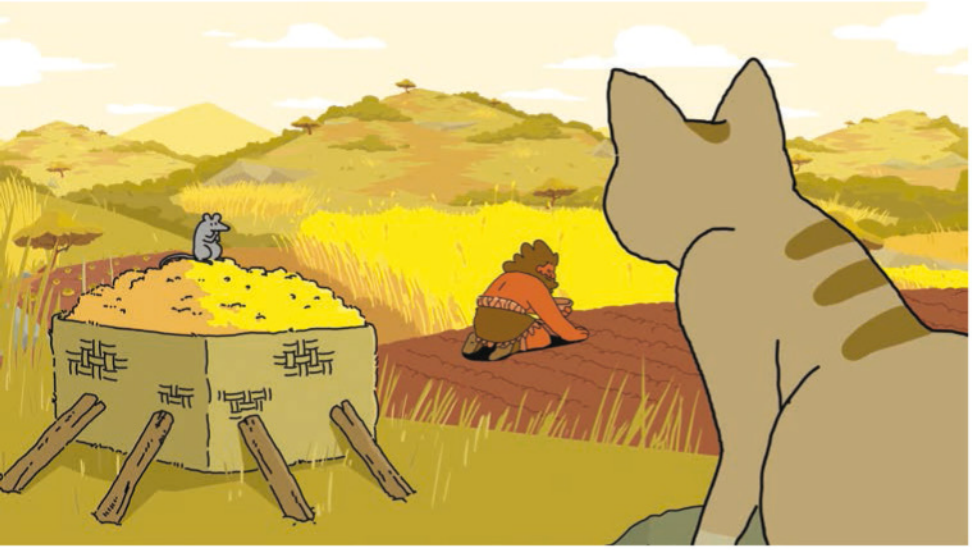
INSIDE THE MIND OF A CAT (2022)

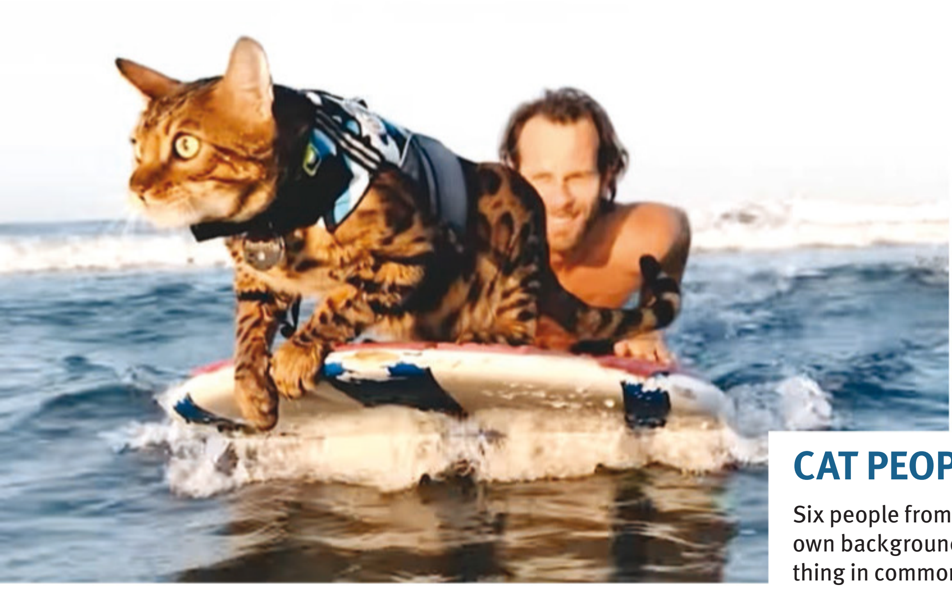
A NETFLIX DOCUMENTARY FILM
INSIDE THE
MIND
OF A
CAT
WATCH NOW | NETFLIX

They pounce, purr, and play. But what's going on in those cute fuzzy heads? Do we really understand our cats' motivations, needs, and desires?

Inside the Mind of a Cat, a feature documentary directed by four-time Emmy Award-winning director, cinematographer, producer, writer, and storyteller Andy Mitchell aims to demystify cats, with experts unpacking everything from their genetics to their history as house pets. The results are riveting. This captivating look at our feline housemates was the No. 7 movie on Netflix in the U.S. and in the Top 10 globally when it was released last August.

A new generation of scientists—experts in feline physiology, behaviour, evolution, and intelligence—are working to uncover the mysteries of the cat, "from their remarkable anatomy, and what gives





them their supernatural abilities—to their intelligence and just how well they stack up against their canine rivals," says Vermont-based Mitchell. "We dive deep into the origin of the human-cat relationship and run a series of experiments to discover just how deep our bond runs." Spoiler alert: "Turns out, yes, they do love us," laughs Mitchell.

Until recently, cats were largely ignored by the scientific community, but in the past decade, there has been a boom in cat science, says the documentary. Every year, new and amazing revelations come to light, in a broad range of areas including a cat's intelligence and their bond with humans. "New and surprising facts about domestic cats are surfacing that needed to be told," says Mitchell of his inspiration to make the film.

The documentary was filmed in the U.S., Istanbul, Scotland, Paris, and Japan—the latter where cats are a cultural phenomenon and the No. 1 pet. "Our love affair with cats goes back 10,000 years and I think it's stronger today than ever before," says Mitchell. "The whole world has an obsession for cats."

With the help of experts, the documentary celebrates cats, reveals surprising insights, dispels myths, and answers longstanding questions about cats: Do cats always land on their feet? Can you train a cat? How do they measure up against their canine counterparts? Do cats actually love us? It also weaves in hands-on advice to help cat owners co-exist with their feline friends.

Viewers discover that cats are supernaturally flexible (thanks to an extra vertebrae) and are able to activate 100 percent of their muscles when they jump. Stories of cats through the ages—the origins of their relationship with humans; why they're associated with witches; how they once went toe to toe with a Pope—fascinate.

"Cats have an ability to survive, to understand, to manipulate, and to love—far greater than most people ever imagined," says Mitchell. "There's a reason they're one of the 10 most successful mammals to ever walk the Earth, and why many believe them to be man's real best friend."

*** Available on Netflix.**

A NETFLIX SERIES
Cat People
JULY 7 | NETFLIX

CAT PEOPLE (2021)

Six people from different areas of the world, each with their own backgrounds and unique life experiences, have one thing in common: they are self-declared cat people and the subjects of the 2021 Netflix series. But they're all far from the stereotypical isolated cat lady.

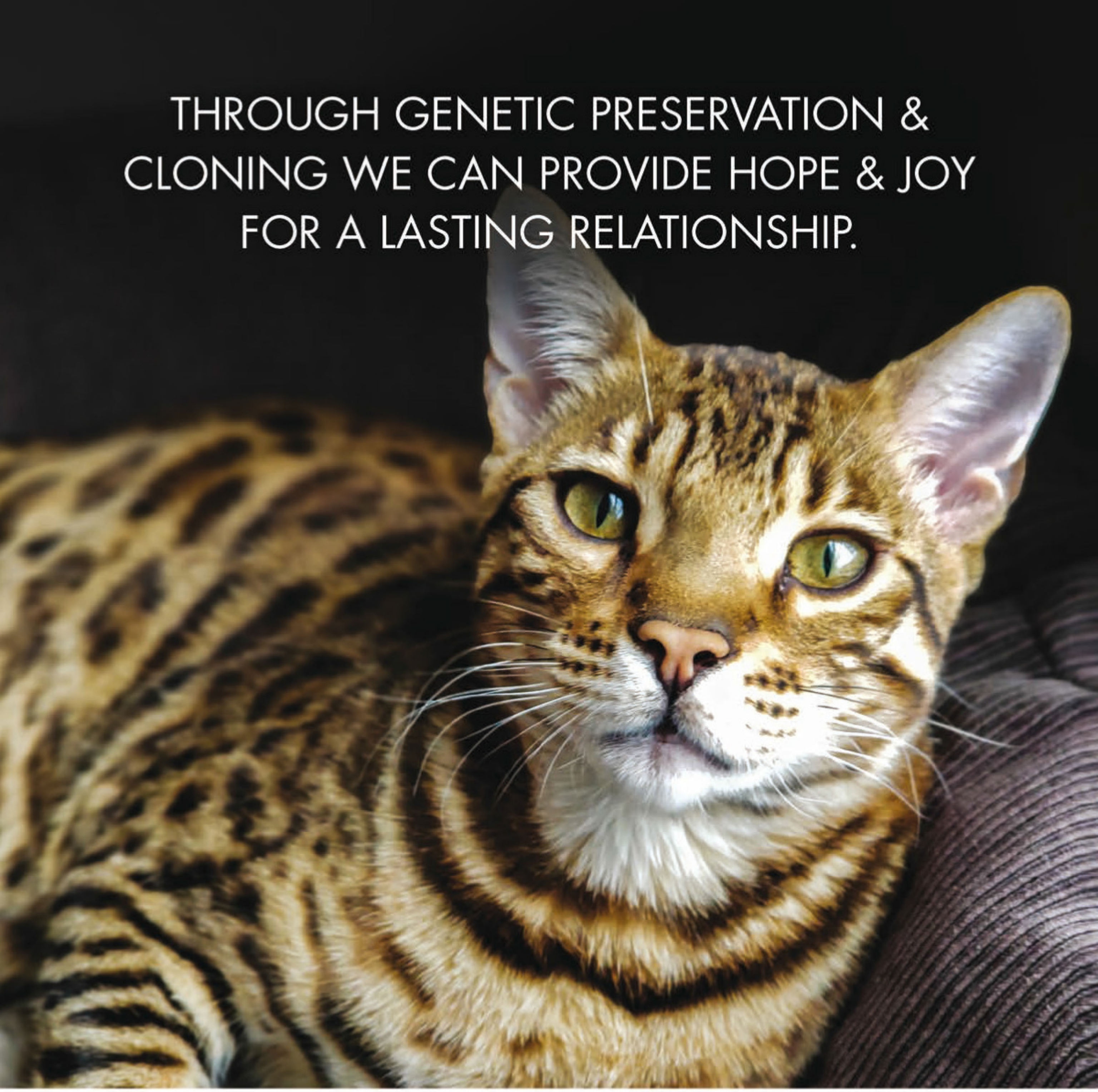
In the first episode, *Cat Rappers Delight*, Cat Rapper Dwayne Molock (@iammoshow to his nearly half a million followers on Instagram), writes songs about how much he loves his five cats. Samantha Martin, a charmingly self-deprecating cat rescuer who also runs a travelling show called the Amazing Acro-Cats and a cat band, The Rock Cats, stars in episode two. And episode three features Sachi, the Japanese artist behind Wakuneco who is gaining fame for her incredibly realistic needle-felted portraits of cats. Her work, painstakingly done whisker by individual whisker, frequently memorializes cats who have passed. [Turn to page 12 for a profile on her incredible work.]

Episode four, *Paws for the Cause,* shares the story of Sterling Davis, known as the Trap King, a cat rescuer and advocate working to bridge the animal-welfare organizations of the world. In an episode titled *Catwabunga!*, a Bengal cat named Maverick has a job as an emotional support animal—and surfing buddy.

Each story dispels stereotypes while celebrating the deep love for cats that has dictated fascinatingly unconventional life paths.

*** Available on Netflix.**

PHOTOS COURTESY FROM NETFLIX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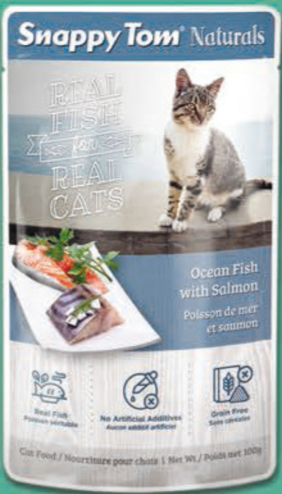
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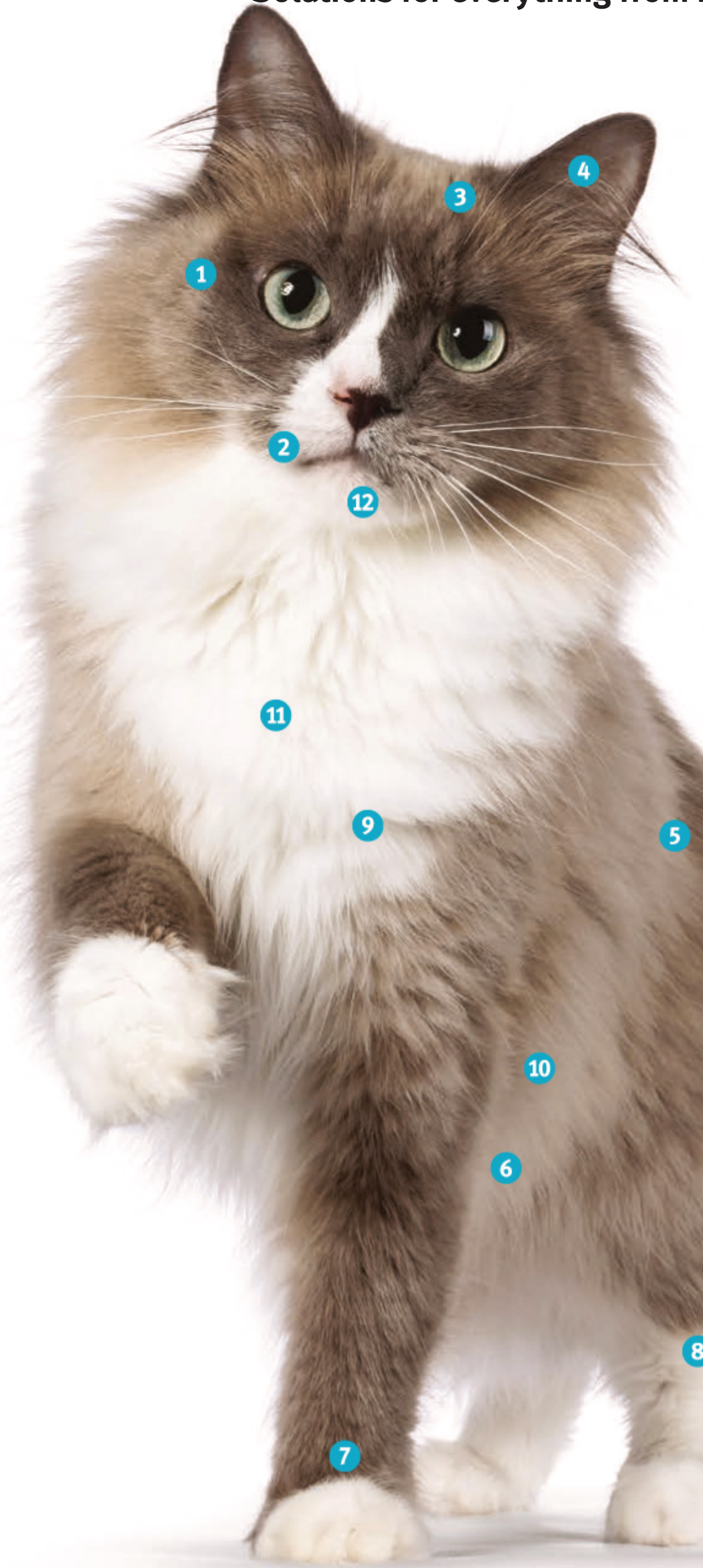

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10. TUNA FOR DINNER!

The Classic Indoor Dry Cat Food Tuna and Brown Rice formula from Chicken Soup for the Soul Pet Food contains ingredients such as tuna, chicken meal, brown rice, carrots, and apples for a balanced meal. Added vitamins and minerals also help support your cat's heart, skin, immune, and digestive health! **(from $19, *chickensouppets.com*)**

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Suitical's vet-recommended feline Recovery Suit is a welcome alternative to the medical cone, comfortably protecting cats recovering from veterinary procedures, skin conditions, and more! **($40, *suitical.com*)**

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THE TOP 10 Cat Breeds

Get to know the most popular pedigreed cats!

By Kelly Caldwell

Founded in 1906, the Cat Fanciers' Association (CFA) currently recognizes 45 unique cat breeds. Meet the most popular cats, according to their current registration numbers!

No.1-The Ragdoll

A sizable cat with a long, soft coat, the Ragdoll was developed in California during the 1960s by Ann Baker. She had a white domestic long-haired cat of Persian descent named Josephine. Baker bred her with Burmese-style cats—one of whom had Siamese point colouring. Josephine's kittens were calm, affectionate, and tended to go limp when picked up. Baker dubbed her new breed the Ragdoll and introduced more Burmese-like cats into her lines until she was satisfied with the breed's type. The Ragdoll was recognized by the CFA in 1998.

Size and Appearance: A large cat, Ragdoll females weigh 15 pounds on average, while males are closer to 20. The breed comes in three coat patterns, but all share those beautiful blue eyes.

Trademark Characteristics: Ragdolls have upside-down V-shaped markings on their foreheads and round blue eyes.

Funny Habits and Quirks: Often described as dog-like, Ragdolls like to follow their people around and are easygoing with other pets. They're happy to be handled and—as the name indicates—most tend to go limp when picked up.

No.2-The Maine Coon

Known as the gentle giant of the cat world, the Maine Coon is the largest pedigreed cat breed. Though this beautiful, shaggy-coated cat wasn't recognized by the CFA until 1976, it was developed in the United States all the way back in the 1800s. It's likely that explorers and early trade merchants who came to the States left behind their cats, who then likely bred to native North American cats.

Size and Appearance: The Maine Coon is the largest of all pedigreed cats. Maine Coons are tall, can be as long as 40 inches, and weigh between 10 and 25 pounds. The glorious, silky coat comes in a variety of colours and patterns.

Trademark Characteristics: This is a very sweet-tempered and loving cat. The Maine Coon's kitten-like, playful personality doesn't go away as they mature.

Funny Habits and Quirks: Unlike most cats, the Maine Coon has a reputation for enjoying the water.

PHOTO TOP MIRASWONDERLAND/BIGSTOCK.COM; INSET CAT FANCIERS' ASSOCIATION

PHOTO CAT FANCIERS' ASSOCIATION

No.3-The Devon Rex

This pixie-like cat was developed in the late 1950s and 1960s by a woman named Beryl Cox near Devon, England. She had a curly-coated kitten and decided to try to create a breed with a soft, wavy coat, large expressive eyes, and large, almost bat-like ears. The result was the Devon Rex, later recognized by the CFA in 1983.

Size and Appearance: The dainty Devon Rex is fairly small, typically weighing less than eight pounds. The head is shaped like a triangle and is offset by very large eyes and ears.

Trademark Characteristics: This cat's coat is very fragile and should be rubbed gently with a cloth—not brushed. The whiskers are often so short and curly that it looks as though they're lacking them.

Funny Habits and Quirks: This is a playful and athletic breed that is capable of remarkable jumps. A kitty condo for this climber is highly recommended. The Devon Rex is a heat seeker, often moving throughout the day to chase the sun for cat naps.

No.4-The Exotic Shorthair

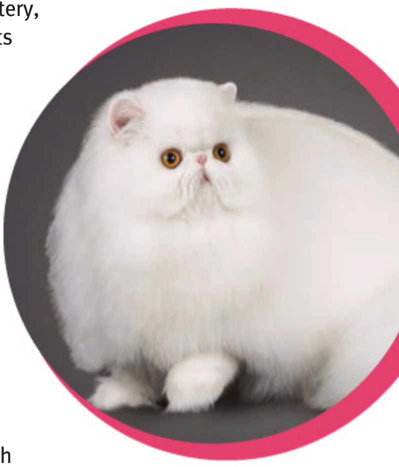
The Exotic was developed in the 1950s and recognized by the CFA in 1967. The goal was to create a shorter-coated version of the Persian cat. Persians were bred with American Shorthairs, Russian Blues, and Burmese cats. The result of these efforts was the Exotic, whose personality, flat nose, and face are similar to those of the Persian, but whose coat is short, dense, and considerably easier to maintain.

Size and Appearance: This is a medium-sized, heavily-boned and low-to-the-ground cat who weighs between 10 to 12 pounds. The head is large and round with full cheeks. The Exotic has become so popular at cat shows that divisions had to be created based upon colour and patterns.

Trademark Characteristics: The Exotic's eye colour corresponds to that of the coat. They have the calm and loving personality of a Persian but are much feistier cats. Their energy level is more akin to the American Shorthair.

Exotics are one of the most affectionate cat breeds. They like to be a part of the action and are known for their habit of following their people from room to room.

No.5-The Persian



This ancient breed is best known for its luxurious coat, expressive face, and loving personality. The exact origins of the Persian are a mystery, but the breed was clearly named for its origin in the Persian empire, a region that once covered a vast portion of the Middle East. Hieroglyphic records dating back to 1684 BC show just how ancient this cat is. The breed was introduced to Europe in the 1600s and to North America in the 19th century, where fanciers worked to perfect the breed's type and temperament. The Persian was recognized by the CFA in 1906.

Size and Appearance:
The Persian is a medium-sized cat with a round head, small ears, large eyes, and a glorious long coat. He weighs between seven and 12 pounds and stands between 10 and 15 inches tall.

Trademark Characteristics: This elegant cat is a beauty—and knows it. That luxurious coat is central to the Persian's regal demeanor and requires daily brushing. But that's okay—the Persian is happiest when on the lap of someone lavishing them with attention.

Funny Habits and Quirks: A very cuddly cat, the Persian tends to stay close. This is the consummate lap-cat, patiently waiting for their person to sit down so they can take their rightful place on their lap. ▶

No.6-The British Shorthair

Evidence suggests that the British Shorthair is one of the most ancient cat breeds, dating back to the first century AD. It's said that Romans brought cats to England to ensure that bugs, snakes, and rodents were taken care of. Over the centuries, the breed was developed in England and made its first show ring appearance in 1871.

In the early 1900s, the breed was at risk, owing to the surge in popularity of long-haired breeds, most notably the Persian. But fanciers continued to breed and ensure that health and temperament were sound. Everything old becomes new again though, and in time this gentle cat's popularity returned. This breed was recognized in 1980.

Size and Appearance: The British Shorthair is a rather substantial cat, with a large round head, a broad chest, and heavily boned legs. They weigh between seven and 17 pounds.

Trademark Characteristics: Their dense and velvety-soft coat is a showstopper. While the blue shade is by far the most popular, the British Shorthair's coat comes in many other colours.

Funny Habits and Quirks: A lap cat this is not. The British Shorthair is an easygoing cat that enjoys being with people but doesn't enjoy being picked up and isn't often found curled up on their person's lap.

No.7-The Abyssinian

Recognized in 1906, the Abyssinian was one of the CFA's foundation breeds. This is considered one of the most ancient cat breeds, dating back to ancient Egypt many thousands of years ago. The Abyssinian is an agile and athletic cat with a unique ticked coat that's a genetic variant of the tabby pattern.

Size and Appearance: The Abyssinian is the supermodel of the cat world: long, lean, and impossibly beautiful. The head is slightly wedge-shaped and those almond-shaped eyes come in several colours.

Trademark Characteristics: The Aby's eyes are beautiful and expressive—perfect for a true people-watcher. This cat is always keeping tabs on whatever is going on in the home.

Funny Habits and Quirks: A true Velcro cat, the Abyssinian likes to remain physically close to its people. This is not the cuddliest member of the cat world—too much to see and do for this active breed—but they are affectionate.

No.8-The Scottish Fold

Discovered in 1961 on a farm in Perthshire, Scotland, the original Scottish Fold was a white barn cat named Susie. Her ears had an unusual fold in their middle, giving her a rather owl-like appearance. When Susie had a litter of kittens, cat fancier William Ross purchased one to serve as the foundation for what would become the Scottish Fold breed. The folded ears are due to a dominant gene mutation and there were concerns about genetic difficulties with this breed. But, in the early 1970s, efforts were made to resolve this, and Scottish Folds were bred with British and American Shorthaired cats. The CFA recognized the Scottish Fold in 1978.

Size and Appearance: This is a medium-sized cat with short legs, a round face, and a generally round body. Their eyes are wide and expressive with colour varying along with his coat.

Trademark Characteristics: With their folded-down ears, this cat has an owl-like appearance. The result is an extremely expressive face. Not all kittens develop folded ears; those who don't are called Scottish Straights.

Funny Habits and Quirks: They may have a tendency to look grumpy, but the Fold is one of the sweetest and most affectionate cats. They love to remain close to their people.

PHOTOS CAT FANCIERS' ASSOCIATION

PHOTO CAT FANCIERS' ASSOCIATION

No.9-The Sphynx

Some cats have an ancient, even noble history. Then there's the Sphynx! Originally named the Canadian Hairless, this breed was developed in Toronto in 1966 from a hairless cat named Prune. The root of Prune's skin condition was a genetic mutation. Efforts were made to create a hairless breed. Success was mixed to say the least, owing to a limited genetic pool. Ultimately, in order to save the breed, other breeds were introduced in order to create a healthier genetic mix. The CFA recognized the Sphynx in 2006.

Size and Appearance: This hairless cat is medium-sized and athletic. The wedge-shaped head is offset by large eyes and ears.

Trademark Characteristics: Aside from the obvious, the Sphynx is known for their pot bellies. Even the fittest of the breed has a rounded abdomen and, without fur to cover it up, it appears quite pronounced.

Funny Habits and Quirks: The Sphynx is a very playful and vocal breed. They are keen to be the center of attention and warm up to strangers quickly. This breed loves the warmth and most Sphynx grow accustomed to wearing sweaters to keep them warm and cozy.

COMPANION CATS REGISTRY

Cat fanciers can also register domestic cats under the CFA's Companion Cat World program. These non-pedigreed felines are card-carrying members of the CFA and can even compete in their own class at CFA shows.

This registry is so popular that non-pedigree domestic shorthair and longhair cats progressed to the ninth most popular ranking in 2021, tying with the Scottish Fold.

As well as a fun way for cat lovers to showcase their pets, the registry has a charitable aspect. A portion of each membership's proceeds goes to rescue and welfare organizations in the region of the cat's residence. Learn more at ***cfa.org***.

No.10-The Siberian

Records indicate that Russia's native forest cat has been around since at least 1000 AD. Originally, they roamed the harsh, dense forests of Siberia, where they were rodent hunters extraordinaire. Over hundreds of years, the Siberian was domesticated and eventually became a popular pet among the Russian aristocracy. In the 20th century, fanciers worked to establish a breed standard, focusing on this cat's thick, triple coat, playful personality, and loving nature. Siberian cats were first imported to the United States in the 1990s and their popularity has grown steadily. The Siberian was recognized by the CFA in 2006.

Size and Appearance: While medium in size, this is a very densely-built and muscular cat, so the Siberian seems surprisingly heavy for its size. The luxurious coat comes in a wide range of colours and patterns that are accepted by the CFA.

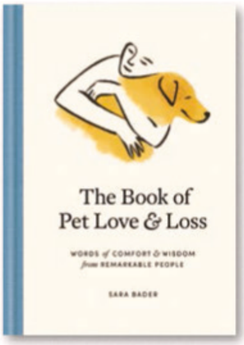
Trademark Characteristics: Perhaps surprisingly, considering that triple coat, many contend the Siberian is a good choice for allergy sufferers. Siberians tend to produce lower amounts of the skin and saliva enzymes that trigger allergic reactions.

Funny Habits and Quirks: Siberians are playful and are known to chatter quite a bit. This breed tends to like water more than most cats. That makes sense—its triple coat is waterproof, after all. ■

CONNIE'S BOOK CLUB

Editor-in-Chief Connie Wilson's selection of must-read books for cat lovers

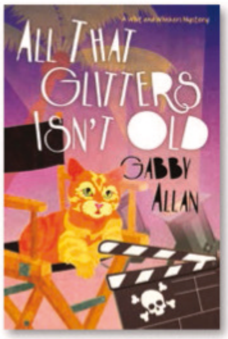
PHOTO LEFT IMPPACT PHOTOGRAPHY/SHUTTERSTOCK


The Book of
Pet Love & Loss
WORDS of COMFORT & WISDOM from REMARKABLE PEOPLE
SARA BADER

The Book of Pet Love and Loss

By Sara Bader

As every cat person knows, the passing of a beloved pet is one of the most profound losses we can experience. *The Book of Pet Love and Loss* provides comfort by reminding readers that others, too, have experienced such heartbreak and that their grief is understood and shared. In amassing a poignant collection of quotations from the letters, journals, memoirs, and diaries of beloved cultural figures, Sara Bader offers comforting and wise words that help heal.


ALL THAT GLITTERS ISN'T OLD
GABBY ALLAN

All That Glitters Isn't Old

By Gabby Allan

Whitney Dagner and her chonky cat Whiskers are enjoying their new life on Catalina Island, but not all is as it seems. Island time is dramatically disrupted when her grandmother's old friend Darren returns to premiere his documentary—but his partner's body is discovered before opening night! Whitney, along with her policeman boyfriend and Whiskers, of course, find themselves responsible for solving the case. A purrfect cozy mystery to curl up with!

HARVEY
and the COLLECTION of IMPOSSIBLE THINGS
GARRET WEYR

Harvey and the Collection of Impossible Things

By Garret Weyr, illustrated by Minnie Phan

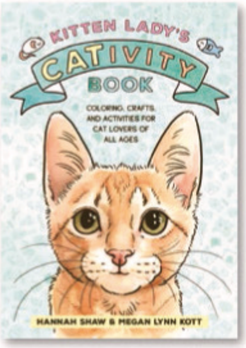
In this heartwarming middle-grade novel, Harvey the stray city cat must muster the courage to brave the mean city streets in search of shelter and acceptance. Charming illustrations throughout highlight the importance of trust, friendship, bravery, and kindness, themes young readers will relate to.

Stevie Holcomb
This is not my cat
Feline friends who picked their humans

This Is Not My Cat: Feline Friends Who Picked Their Humans

By Stevie Holcomb

Every cat person knows we don't adopt cats—they adopt us. *This Is Not My Cat* is a hilarious and heartwarming collection of stories and photos from humans around the world who have been adopted by their cat in the most unexpected ways, proof that cats find us when we need them the most!


KITTEN LADY'S
CATIVITY
BOOK
COLORING, CRAFTS, AND ACTIVITIES FOR CAT LOVERS OF ALL AGES
HANNAH SHAW & MEGAN LYNN KOTT

Kitten Lady's CATivity Book

By Hannah Shaw and Megan Lynn Kott

This activity book is packed with cat puzzles, projects, and colouring pages to delight cat lovers of all ages. *New York Times* bestselling author Hannah Shaw has teamed up with illustrator Megan Lynn Kott to create an engaging book filled with creative games, DIYs, and activities, along with fun facts and ideas to help vulnerable cats.

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Tiny Cat Stories

Cat love in short form: miniature, reader-submitted cat stories of no more than 100 words.

The Little Things

I sat with my mom, my best friend, for 13 days/nights while she lay in hospice. It was the hardest thing I ever had to witness. My mom passed on Christmas day; I went home, totally devastated and exhausted. My cat, Blackjack, immediately jumped on my lap, put his little paws around my neck and squeezed gently. He then put his paw on my cheek and kissed the tears running down my face. This cat, bless his heart, helped me so much to ease my pain and realize it's also the little things in life that really matter, too. —*Lynn Rosenthal*

Send Me a Sign

My Jack Russell of 16 years passed away the end of 2020 and I asked him to send me a sign—a yellow flower—to show me he was still with me. A week later I found Mimosa at a shelter and decided to adopt her. I was apprehensive. I thought maybe it was too soon. Then I discovered that a mimosa is a yellow flower in Australia. Freddie sent her to me and she has brought me so much joy and healing. —*Nikki Cataldo*

Lifesaver in a Tuxedo

Mittens is my therapy cat in that she trained herself by waling me up when I am sleeping when my blood sugars are dropping to dangerous lows. The first time she did this, I didn't know it would continue for now going on nine years. The dangers of low blood sugars can result in stroke and even death. Mittens is my lifesaver who wears a Tuxedo. She has saved my life on more occasions than I can count. I love her so much 100 words is not enough! —*Terri O'Brien, RN*

Winston the Magnificent

After days of trying, Van's whistle finally brought the stray, matted tuxedo out of the woods and straight to his arms. We had three cats and for the first time the shelter was filled, so Van dropped him at a vet's. If he was cleaned up and vaccinated, maybe the shelter would take him. But when he returned to retrieve him, the vet held the long, friendly cat high into the air and pronounced, "This cat is *MAGNIFICENT!"* Without hesitation, Van brought Winston the Magnificent home where he brought us joy for 12 years until passing this month. —*Sue Senecah*

Pretty Kitty

Snuggy was found with a feral cat colony. She followed the woman who fed those cats, purring for attention. The woman realized she wasn't feral at all and brought her to the animal shelter. We adopted her and named her Snuggy but quickly realized she only responded to "Pretty Kitty." It seemed unfair that our other cats didn't have special names too. So, we decided to bestow nicknames on all the cats, highlighting their most unique qualities. We have "Pretty Kitty," "Sweet Kitty," "Soft Kitty," and "Wild Kitty," the latter also being known as "Destroyer of Cities Kitty." —*Carolyn Fenzl*

Mighty Heart

Geraldine unexpectedly came into my life. She was a senior cat from foster care who my landlord chose to drive field rats away after neither poison nor traps worked. Geraldine terrorized me with her meowing the first couple of nights, wanting to enter my bedroom at night. However, Geraldine was so loving and sweet that she stole my heart, and I adopted her. Geraldine (aka Gigi) and I are an item now, and I cannot imagine my life without her mighty little cat heart. —*Bo Syrotiak*

ILLUSTRATION XXXXXX

Get published in Modern Cat! Submit your cat story of no more than 100 words (word count strictly enforced) to *tinycatstories@moderncat.com.* *By submitting you are consenting to publication of your story.*

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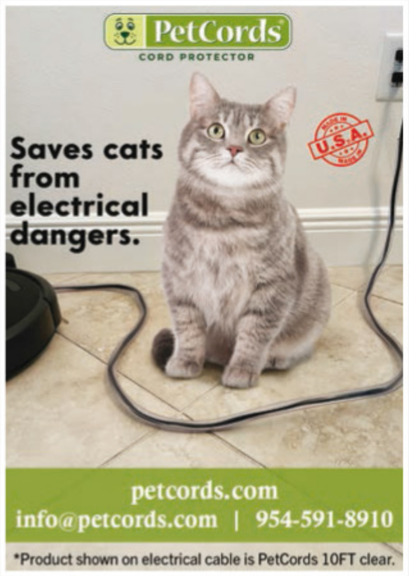
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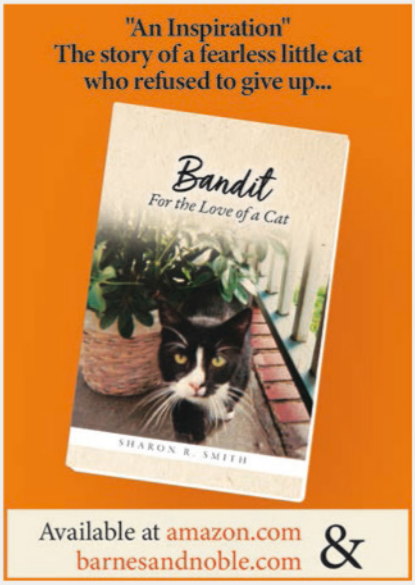
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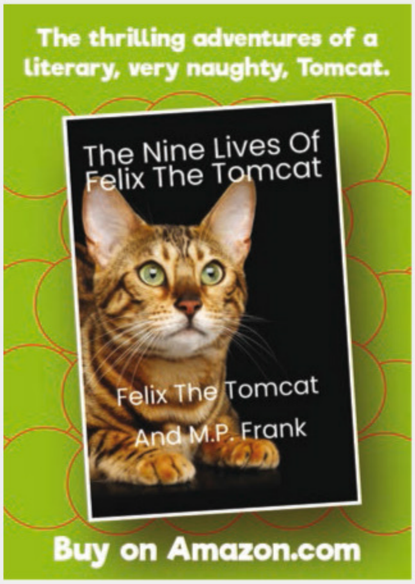
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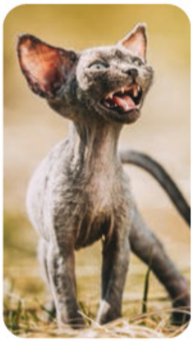
9
INTERESTING CAT FACTS

Social gathering? Try these cat facts to get the conversation flowing!

By Rose Frosek

Orange Cat? Probably a Boy

Orange female cats are fairly rare. 80 percent of cats with orange fur are males. Furthermore, there are no solid orange felines. They all have markings of some sort, often a faint "M" on their foreheads.



Cats: Successful Manipulators

Cats know how to get what they want. According to a 2009 study, they do it by mimicking babies crying. Cats wanting to be fed will make an urgent cry or meowing sound in the 220 to 520-hertz frequency range. Babies' cries, which humans find difficult to ignore, are also in this frequency range, usually between 300 and 600 hertz.

Cats Can Get Alzheimer's Disease

Ageing cats can develop a feline form of Alzheimer's disease. A 2006 study identified a key protein that can build up in the feline brain, causing mental deterioration and compromising neural pathways in a similar way to that seen in human Alzheimer's sufferers.

Fancy a Little Nip?

Is your cat indifferent to catnip? Not all cats respond to it. In fact, half of cats don't respond to *Nepeta cataria* at all. Sensitivity to catnip is inherited. Cats with one catnip-sensitive parent have a one in two chance of developing the sensitivity. If both parents respond to catnip, the chances of their kittens being sensitive to catnip rise to three in four.

Your Cat Is Herding You—and It's Working

Does your cat rub and dart between your legs as you walk? Your cat is herding you. "While cats are certainly not bred to be herding animals like some dogs, they do learn to direct human behaviour—and motion—when their behaviour is reinforced," Dilara Goskel Parry, a cat behaviour expert at Feline Minds, told *The Dodo*. "For example, 'I do this, and my person is going to feed me.' Many cat owners inadvertently reinforce these behaviours by moving faster and feeding the cat."

Cats—Unique as Snowflakes

The ridges on a cat's nose are as unique as a fingerprint.

Eye See You

Cats are nearsighted, but their peripheral vision and night vision are much better than ours.

More "Toe" Love

Cats are supposed to have 18 toes—five toes on each front paw and four toes on each back paw—but polydactyl cats are six-toed, thanks to the polydactyl gene. The resultant extra "thumb" on their paws gives the impression of wearing mittens. The Ernest Hemingway Home and Museum in Key West, FL is famously home to approximately 60 polydactyl cats. Ernest Hemingway was given a six-toed white cat, named Snow White, by a ship's captain. Some of the cats who live on the museum grounds are descendants of that original cat.

Cats Buy Into Timeshares

Cats have developed strategies for sharing space. Professor Alan Wilson of Royal Veterinary College and a team of other scientists attached GPS trackers and cameras to 50 felines. They found that the cats appeared to timeshare territory to avoid conflict with other felines.

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For additional information, please call Sherry Buckles, assistant dean of development, at 919-513-6811.
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